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General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

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Saturday, 14 September 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Address by Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kabila (*spoke in French*): I am honoured and gratified once again to take the floor before the Assembly, to which I extend the most cordial greetings on behalf of the Congolese people, its Government and on my own behalf.

First and foremost, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you very sincerely, along with the whole of your Bureau, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly.

I wish also to convey to your predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, our great appreciation for the extremely important work that he accomplished during his term in office.

Allow me also to welcome the accession to the United Nations of the Swiss Confederation and of Timor-Leste as Member States.

Lastly, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his dedication to universal values and for his active involvement in the quest for solutions to the conflicts besetting humankind.

At a time when the whole world is remembering the fateful date of 11 September 2001, the Congolese people, its Government and I myself wish to take this opportunity to convey once again our solidarity and our compassion to the American people and to the grieving families around the world who were victimized in this heinous act of terrorism.

This is indeed an appropriate setting in which to urge all peace-loving and justice-loving States in the world to commit to working together to combat this evil in all its forms.

For its part, as I had announced in my address to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, my Government, on 21 December 2001, established a national coordinating committee to combat international terrorism, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

The first part of my statement will focus on the status of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Externally speaking, it should be noted that, faced with obstruction to the implementation of the Lusaka

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Agreement as regards the withdrawal of foreign forces, my Government, basing itself on the relevant provisions of the Security Council that encourage bilateral discussions, has entered into the Pretoria Agreement with Rwanda on the one hand, with the facilitation of South Africa and the assistance of the United Nations, and, on the other hand, it has signed the Luanda Agreement with Uganda, under the sponsorship of Angola.

The Pretoria Agreement, signed on 30 July 2002, essentially addresses the question of the withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the disarmament of the former Rwandan Army (ex-FAR) forces and the Interahamwe. The Luanda Agreement, signed on 6 September 2002, deals with the issue of the complete withdrawal of Ugandan troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as with cooperation and the normalization of relations between our two States.

Almost 45 days have passed since the signing of the Pretoria Agreement — half of the time period set by the timetable for its implementation — without any significant progress having been made on the ground. The commitment undertaken yesterday by the President of Rwanda to begin the withdrawal of troops as from next week may mark a decisive phase in the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement.

For its part, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, consistent with the commitments that it has undertaken, had already assembled at Kamina more than 2,000 Rwandan ex-combatants, who are awaiting repatriation to Rwanda. Furthermore, it has notified the third party, as of 5 September 2002, about additional information concerning Rwandan ex-combatants.

With regard to the Luanda Agreement, it should be noted that the withdrawal of Ugandan troops has begun and that a joint peacemaking programme has been set up in the Ituri region.

The successful implementation of the Pretoria and Luanda Agreements, in particular with respect to the withdrawal of Rwandan and Ugandan troops, will have a clear impact on the conclusion of a comprehensive and inclusive agreement in the context of the domestic political process aimed at national reconciliation and the reunification of the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a view to the prompt holding of free, democratic and transparent elections at all levels.

Following consultations with various political and social groups, as well as with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Government suggested that arrangements for the signing of an inclusive agreement could begin at an early date.

I would like now to turn to the particular and worrying situation that prevails in the eastern part of my country. I am referring to the bloody and distressing events that took place in Kisangani and Bunia; the resumed fighting in the Kivu region; the rapes; the plundering of the wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and all the other human rights violations that have taken place. I also have in mind the appalling destruction of fauna, flora and the ecosystem in general in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I urgently appeal to the international community to put an end to this tragic situation, which is afflicting the people of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to ensure that the perpetrators of these vile and barbaric acts are punished and brought to justice.

Likewise, we look forward eagerly to the conclusions of the Panel of Experts, which we hope will be accompanied by proposals for sanctions to be imposed on those who are plundering the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is the bleak situation that has been prevailing in my country for more than four years; the socio-economic situation of the people has deteriorated as a result of the war, which has deprived my Government of more than half of its resources. In order to deal with this economic disaster and to alleviate the suffering of our people as much as possible, a number of measures been in place for more than a year. The tangible effects of these positive measures include the stabilization of our currency and of the price of major consumer goods, as well as the resumption of cooperation with international financial institutions.

In the same spirit, a large-scale national reconstruction programme is under way, aimed at the rehabilitation of the basic social infrastructure so as to promote the recovery of the economy and the process of development.

I have condemned the terrorism and the tragic events of 11 September 2001, which plunged the American people and all of humankind into mourning. I have provided an updated review of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular with regard to the Pretoria and Luanda Agreements. I have expressed my grave concern about the disturbing humanitarian situation prevailing in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is characterized by massacres and massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. I have also pointed to the particularly difficult socio-economic situation affecting the population of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, noting that it has been aggravated by war and its adverse effects. If the war persists, the Government's efforts to achieve economic recovery may well be completely nullified.

In order to put an end to this protracted tragedy, I earnestly appeal, through this Assembly, to the entire international community, to mobilize and become more deeply involved in the quest for solutions to bring about the reunification of our national territory and to return peace and stability to my country and to the whole of the Great Lakes region.

I would like to make several specific points. First, I believe that a conference should be held, under the auspices of the United Nations, on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region. My country's desire, in keeping with its African tradition, has always been to live in peace and harmony with all the States of Africa and of the world, beginning with its neighbours.

Secondly, the international community should be more actively involved in resolving the conflict that is tearing the Democratic Republic of the Congo apart. It is clear today that the international community seems to be forgetting the role played by Africa in the development of today's wealthy States, and is showing a degree of indifference to African issues.

Thirdly, the large number of Security Council resolutions which have, to date, remained unimplemented.

Fourthly, I am thinking of technical contributions and the mobilization of the international community to rehabilitate our ecosystem, so as to preserve this heritage of humankind.

The founding fathers of our universal Organization, who were convinced that nations could be brought together only through peaceful settlements of conflict, signed the Charter in order to ensure that no armed conflict would be a matter of indifference to the remainder of humanity. For this reason, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which believes deeply in the universal values championed by the United Nations, expresses the hope that all the organs of the United Nations will play their role to the fullest to ensure that we may silence weapons wherever they are being used, in order to make peace a genuine right within the grasp of all of us.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the statement he has just made.

Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zambia.

Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mwanawasa: Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the Presidency of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. My delegation is confident that, given your vast political skills, you will execute your responsibility as President of the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly most honourably.

My delegation pledges its total support and cooperation to you in the discharge of your important responsibilities. You can depend on Zambia's support and cooperation.

May I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea, for the excellent manner in

which he presided over the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

My delegation also congratulates the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for the able manner in which he has steered the work of the United Nations.

We are happy to welcome Switzerland and East Timor as new Members of the United Nations family. My delegation looks forward to working closely with the two new Member States.

Three days ago, the world commemorated the 1st anniversary of the tragic events of 11 September 2001. The past year has witnessed a global resolve to fight international terrorism. My Government wishes to join the host country in remembering the tragic events of 11 September 2001.

My delegation salutes the efforts of the United Nations in ensuring that there is peace in the world. I am pleased to note that there are signs of positive developments in most of the trouble spots where there have been conflicts.

The African Union and the international community have to work together as partners in conflict prevention and peace-building. In the past forty years, Africa has lost too much blood through conflicts. Zambia is ready and willing to play her part to create in Africa a culture of respect for the rule of law and human rights, social and economic development, and to promote peace and security. In this regard we welcome the positive signs towards peace in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other conflict areas in Africa.

The search for peace is a continuous process. I therefore appeal to the international community to continue extending assistance to bring about peace in the conflict areas around the world.

It is against this background that my Government welcomes the implementation of the Lusaka Peace Protocol in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since the death of Dr. Jonas Savimbi, the former UNITA rebel leader, in February 2002, the prospects for peace in that country and the entire subregion are encouraging.

The ceasefire agreement, signed between the Angolan Government and the UNITA military, further paved way for the implementation of the Lusaka Peace Protocol of November 1994.

The full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol is vital for the reintegration of Angola in the Southern African economy and the promotion of regional peace and stability. The people of Angola require the moral and material support of the international community to complete that process.

I would like also to express my country's appreciation to the United Nations Security Council for the measures being undertaken to strengthen the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). I am further gratified that the efforts by His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, former President of Botswana, to promote internal political dialogue are bearing fruit. I also wish to note, with appreciation, that the number of foreign troops still on Democratic Republic of Congo soil has been significantly reduced.

Conflicts have a negative impact on the economic life of the region. To Zambia, as a host to refugees from Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other parts of the continent, the recent signs of peace are significantly important. My Government hopes that these positive signs will result in the voluntary repatriation of refugees to their countries. Currently, there are 270,000 refugees in designated camps and about 120,000 others who are simultaneously settled in the border areas among the local people in Zambia. My Government will continue to require the material and financial support of the international community to help in the refugee management effort.

Since the thirty-seventh session of the Assembly of the former Organization of African Unity, held in Lusaka in July 2001, Africa has continued to refine its partnerships with the rest of the world to foster development. The vehicle for this effort is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). I wish to convey my Government's appreciation to the leaders of the Group of 8 for endorsing the NEPAD programme during their annual meeting, held in Kananaskis, Canada, on 27 June 2002. I note with appreciation that the G8 countries considered positively the request by the four-nation African representatives of Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, that they earmark for Africa 50 per cent of their projected foreign aid increases in the coming years. I wish to thank the

European Union, which has supported the NEPAD programme and remains committed to its pledge of support for the initiative.

The past year has seen practical and positive developments in the response of the cooperating partners to African trade liberalization initiatives. In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to welcome the initiative of the United States Government to refine the scope of the African Growth and Opportunity Act to increase the number of products eligible to be exported to the United States.

In the health sector, Africa is experiencing the catastrophic impact of a combination of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and a series of outbreaks of such diseases as malaria, tuberculosis and diarrhoea. Unfortunately, my country is one of those hard hit in this regard. Although my Government has implemented health reforms that focus on ameliorating the situation, far more resources are required to address the problem.

My Government has taken a decision to acquire affordable antiretroviral drugs for distribution to people affected with AIDS. My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to our cooperating partners, who have been forthcoming in providing resources for this effort. Early deaths from HIV/AIDS-related illnesses are robbing the country of skilled professionals and creating large numbers of orphaned children.

As members are aware, a combination of natural and other factors has caused a food shortage and crisis in the southern African subregion. In response to this impending catastrophe, on 18 July 2002 the United Nations World Food Programme launched an appeal for food aid in support of the affected areas. In response to the food shortage, a number of countries and international organizations have pledged their support. My delegation pays tribute to the United Nations and other cooperating partners in providing assistance to Zambia to mitigate the food shortfall.

However, it has come to the Government's attention that some of the food aid products offered to Zambia constituted genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The offer of genetically modified foods has created a difficult situation for the Government. While, on the one hand, we are determined to procure food and seed for the mostly rural population that is hardest hit by the food shortage, we have expressed concern over the true impact of GMOs on our people and soil. Due to our low scientific and technological base, Government has opted for the procurement of non-GMO food products. It is not my Government's intention to sacrifice the lives of the Zambian people by taking this position. However, given the lack of and often conflicting international information on the possible effects of genetically modified products on humans, I therefore wish to request Members' understanding of Zambia's position on GMOs. In this regard, my Government has accepted an offer from the United States Government for Zambian scientists to visit America to study first-hand the GMO factor. Their findings will help us to map out a way forward and to make informed decisions and choices.

In conclusion, I wish the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session successful deliberations of the issues before it. I wish to appeal to all Member States to ensure the rapid implementation of decisions emanating therefrom.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zambia for his statement.

Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by His Royal Highness Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga.

His Royal Highness Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Royal Highness Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata (Tonga): As I offer you my congratulations upon your assumption of your high office, Mr. President, I must also praise your

predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo, for a truly exemplary term as President, which was marked at the outset by the Nobel Peace Prize for the Organization and which closed with the promise of the recently concluded World Summit on Sustainable Development. Together with the continuing leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the support of the Organization's Member States, I look forward to that tradition of excellence and achievement continuing under your presidency, Sir.

I add my voice to the chorus within this Assembly warmly welcoming the Swiss Confederation to our fold and congratulating East Timor on its forthcoming accession to membership. Tonga very much looks forward to working with both of them as fully-fledged States Members of the Organization.

While 11 September 2001 will for all of us be ever present, it is fitting that we pause to remember those who fell in the line of duty and those other loved ones who perished on that terrible day. Those horrific events should serve to inspire us to rededicate ourselves and galvanize our collective efforts to fight the scourge of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

My Government continues to formulate measures in compliance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). These measures have both national and regional dimensions, and a number of workshops have been held in the Pacific region during the year to ensure that Pacific island countries formulate viable counter-terrorism measures and to assist them to do so. A number of key Government agencies, including civil aviation, immigration, police, finance and customs agencies, have already adopted measures, including financial and rapid reaction security measures, to tighten the security aspect of the resolution. Obviously, the sustained assistance of developed countries in our region has been very useful in our endeavours. It is our earnest hope that our required country report will be before the Counter-Terrorism Committee by the year's end. In this respect, I am grateful to the Committee and to the Security Council for their patience.

Since I last addressed this Assembly, at the Millennium Summit, there have been further signposts to add to the developmental path. These are signposts so readily identifiable as Doha, Monterrey and, now, Johannesburg. These names epitomize the vision and the as yet unfulfilled promise of our collective development aspirations in this era of globalization. In that regard, I commend President Fox and the people of Mexico for their sterling efforts earlier this year. It was pleasing that consensus prevailed on critical thematic issues of particular import to developing countries, and we look forward to the opportunities that Monterrey will afford. I further commend President Mbeki and the people of South Africa for their wonderful achievement earlier this month. I am particularly pleased that the Johannesburg Summit gave prominence and profile in the Plan of Implementation to the sustainable development of small island developing States. In that regard, Tonga looks forward to the 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action in 2004 as a further signpost in the developmental path that will give impetus to what was achieved in Johannesburg. In preparing for that review, Tonga will continue its national efforts to refine and identify areas for specific priority capacity-building needs, as well as opportunities to take increased advantage of financial and technological support.

As a developing ocean State, we are encouraged by the particular commitments in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on fish stocks and fishing practices. The implementation of those time-bound commitments requires responsibility and good faith from all parties so as to ensure that States like mine obtain their fair share of their vastest and most bountiful resource. We are pleased that the United Nations fish stocks Agreement has entered into force and welcome the informal meeting of States parties that took place here in New York recently. In this respect, we urge other Member States to become party to that important Agreement. Within this context, we also continue to welcome the preparations under way for giving effect to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The Convention is a testament to our commitment to conserving and sustainably managing a critically important resource. As such, we continue to urge the distant water fishing nations with a real fisheries interest in our region to make every effort to become a party to the Convention. Tonga continues to value the work and decisions taken this year of the Meeting of States Parties to the United Convention on the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority and the third meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. We look forward to an important milestone

later this year: the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. I hope that Member States will consider the upcoming anniversary as an opportune time to become a party to the Convention.

Our region has further endorsed a first-ever regional oceans policy that elaborates some guiding principles that should serve as a template for countries like Tonga to consider using to developing national ocean policies that strengthen coordination and complementarity in our ocean-related activities. One activity that continues to give rise to deep concern is the transshipment of radioactive material through the waters of our region. In this regard, while we might understand the needs and requirements of those States that engage in this activity, it is just as important that the necessary framework for prior notice, consent, safety and compensation for countries like Tonga not be ignored.

Tonga continues to support the development of an appropriate environmental vulnerability index for small island developing States and commends the continuing work of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission in that regard. It is our belief that, with the participation of States, such an index has the potential to provide accurate indicators of vulnerability to which small islands in particular are exposed, such as natural disasters, climate change and sea level rise. As such, Tonga welcomes the commitment by certain Annex I countries under the Kyoto Protocol made during the Johannesburg Summit to ratify the Protocol and the further opportunities for progress that such positive action presents.

On 30 and 31 December 2001, tropical cyclone Waka traversed the northern group of Tonga with a wind velocity in excess of 100 miles an hour and resulted in substantial and horrific damage to those islands. To be sure, the damage was estimated at over 140 million Tongan dollars, but thankfully there was no loss of life. The inevitable and difficult task of relief, recovery and reconstruction was compounded by the geographic distance from the capital of the northern group and the sheer scale of the damage sustained. Luckily, action by traditional donor Governments and our neighbours within the region, territorial governments, regional and international organizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum and specific United Nations agencies, was swift and generous and provided much-needed assistance to my Government. I am deeply grateful to those Governments, organizations and agencies, as well as to non-governmental organizations and churches, for their valued assistance in our time of crisis. Two weeks after the cyclone, nature, having wrought such devastating winds, caused more favourable weather to prevail, which greatly helped the replanting phases of recovery. We expect a resurgence of the critical agricultural, tourism and fisheries sectors by the end of the year.

While information and communications technology (ICT) remains the way to go, we continue with our own efforts to bridge the digital divide and take maximum advantage of the digital revolution. To do so will require joint efforts in tandem with the international community and the United Nations, particularly through the efforts of the United Nations ICT Task Force as one avenue. Such efforts must be characterized by partnership and inclusion in the ICT process, so that all developing States in every region can benefit. The United Nations role of bridging, coordinating and integrating activities is therefore crucial. In that respect, we urge continued support for the Small Island Developing States Information Network (SIDSNet) and for efforts to strengthen its capacity to support and assist small island developing States.

We welcome the fruitful outcome earlier this year of the General Assembly special session on children. While we recognize the promise it holds for the welfare and well-being of all children, like the outcome of the recent special session on HIV/AIDS, commitments must progress beyond rhetoric into concrete action.

Tonga fully supports the work of the Security Council and, like other speakers before me, calls for the full implementation of all of its resolutions to ensure an enduring peace in arenas of conflict and to lift the veil of doubt where such doubt could lead to conflict.

In one such arena, we join the call for an end to violence, a return to the negotiating table and the building of confidence so as to realize the coexistence of two States, side by side in secure and recognized borders.

Tonga also supports efforts to streamline the work of the General Assembly so that it can play the pivotal and focused role we desire. In like terms, we support the call for reform of the Security Council, in which the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats

would be increased to accord with and respond to today's realities.

Finally, with respect to pertinent regional issues, Tonga endorses the views expressed in both the Nadi Declaration, contained in document A/56/1015, and the Suva Communiqué, that will be contained in document A/57/331. They are the respective outcomes of the third Summit of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Heads of State and Government, held in Nadi, Fiji, in July 2002, and of the annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders held in Suva, Fiji, in August 2002.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga for the statement he has just made.

His Royal Highness Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Kassymzhomart K. Tokaev, Secretary of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Tokaev (Kazakhstan): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the high office of the presidency of the current session and to express confidence that, under your able leadership, the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly will be successful and fruitful.

The terrorist acts in the United States, the anniversary of which we have just marked with great sorrow, prompted all mankind to pay close attention to the fundamental issues of sustainable development. The barbaric acts of international terrorists demonstrated very convincingly the fragility of the world we live in and the importance for all States to join their efforts to ensure economic development and civil rights, security and stability.

The contemporary world, with all the diversity of its political and economic systems, requires, as never before, agreed and coordinated efforts by the community of nations to protect common human values, primarily the rights of all citizens to a decent life.

Has mankind been able to rid itself of its own entrenched flaws — poverty, environmental pollution, disease and crime? The answer is more than evident: the community of nations has not made progress in resolving those issues. Thus, breeding grounds have been created for the spread of such dangerous phenomena as terrorism and drug trafficking, religious extremism and the illegal arms trade. Having crossed the threshold of the new millennium, mankind has been forced to exert efforts to resolve centuries-old issues and to counter new threats.

The events that took place last year have changed the world and have prompted everybody to think hard about the foundations that support it. The community of nations faces a pressing task: to create a new architecture of global security based on a multi-polar world, and to set up effective mechanisms to overcome the obstacles to modern economic and political development.

In our view, under these circumstances, the role and the responsibility of international institutions, primarily the United Nations, become significantly greater. Strengthening the authority of the United Nations is our common responsibility. We believe that the existing system of adopting decisions affecting the fundamental interests of mankind should never be doubted, let alone reshaped in any way. The issues of the world and peace should be considered and decisions reflecting the will and the interests of the community of nations should be adopted only within the framework of the United Nations.

Grounds for the use of force against Member States should be irrefutable evidence, corroborated by international institutions, of their illegal action to disrupt the world order and to undermine global and regional security.

The changed world forces us to take a fresh look at disarmament issues, primarily the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime. It is becoming more and more evident that, under these new conditions, the community of nations should focus its main efforts on preventing terrorists from getting hold of weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, joint action by Member States to continue to consolidate the non-proliferation regime and to make it universal deserve special attention. We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which binds its participants to take nuclear disarmament measures,

should continue to play an important role in the area of nuclear arms control.

As one of the few States in the world that have voluntarily relinquished their nuclear heritage, we believe that a prerequisite for an atmosphere of trust in contemporary international relations is the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Because it attaches great significance to the preservation of peace and security in Central Asia, Kazakhstan is interested in signing, as soon as possible, a treaty creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Such a zone could be an important contribution by regional States to the disarmament and arms control efforts of international community.

Further, additional results-oriented efforts to prevent the excessive accumulation of and illegal trafficking in small arms are no less important. It is impossible to ignore the alarming fact that 55 per cent of known small arms stocks, equivalent to 305 million pieces, are now already in private hands. In view of the need for targeted actions in this area, we express our willingness to host in Kazakhstan, in 2003, an international conference on this subject under the auspices of the United Nations.

Our country, home to the Baikonur space launching pad, is well aware of the harmful effects of the militarization of outer space. Therefore, we believe that it is imperative to start, without delay, talks to prevent an arms race in outer space.

From the very start, Kazakhstan has resolutely and unconditionally supported counter-terrorist actions by the international coalition. Without any doubt, its effective measures have contributed to the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan.

Together with all interested States and parties, our country supports the key role of the United Nations in the post-conflict peace-building in Afghanistan. We intend to take a most active part in implementing an international aid programme for Afghanistan. Kazakhstan is cooperating successfully with the World Food Programme by using it to send its agricultural products to Afghanistan. Our country has provided the Afghan people with free humanitarian aid in the form of grain. We believe that early implementation of the decisions adopted at the Tokyo Conference will contribute to the successful solution of the Afghan problem and to the eradication of international terrorism.

When we speak about Afghanistan, we cannot ignore the issue of drug trafficking. Unfortunately, that long-suffering country continues to be a main source of the proliferation of drugs that are being transported through the territories of the Central Asian States and sold on the world markets, first of all in Europe. This problem is getting more and more dangerous and requires urgent and effective measures by the community of nations. We hope that the coordinating role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme will be strengthened. One has to realize that it is the drug trafficking that constitutes a financial basis of international terrorism. When we put up a just fight against that evil, we, unfortunately, fight its manifestations and do not pay due attention to the root cause of the phenomenon. If this state of affairs remains unchanged, curbing international terrorism will turn into an indefinite process that will exhaust all financial and political resources of the community of nations.

The world community is closely watching the development of the situation in the Middle East. Interested States quite justifiably express their concern over the deteriorating chances of a peaceful settlement. We support the need to convene as soon as possible an international conference on the Middle East settlement in order to take parallel steps: to strengthen Israel's security, to strengthen Palestinian economic and political institutions and to settle the details of the final peace agreement. The international community also has to intensify its efforts to curb terrorism and meet the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people.

Since the first days of its independence, Kazakhstan has focussed its foreign affairs efforts on the creation of a security system in Asia. That goal was advanced by the first summit meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), convened in June of this year in Almaty. For the first time ever, the heads of the major Asian States came together to express their political will and interest in a joint search for ways to strengthen peace and stability in the Asian region.

The adoption at the summit meeting of the final documents, the Almaty Act on the institutionalization of the CICA and the Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue among

Civilizations, has had an extraordinary significance. For the first time ever, the Asian continent has adopted documents making a significant contribution to regional and global security. Expressing our appreciation to the CICA member States for their efficient work at the summit meeting, we call on all interested States to continue their work to implement confidence-building measures in Asia.

We in Kazakhstan believe that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization can become an effective tool in ensuring security and stability in the region. The main mission of that organization is to address jointly the problems of security, as well as to create effective mechanisms for trade, economic and humanitarian cooperation.

The Johannesburg Summit fully highlighted the important need to overcome the antagonisms of modern economic and political development. It has become evident that with increasing globalization, the community of nations will have to pay close attention to the search for ways to ensure a more harmonious division of profits and benefits between the rich and poor among mankind. Addressing the forum in South Africa, the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, rightly observed that without the natural and human resources of the developing countries the rich States would have never become rich.

It is commonly recognized that sustainable development is the only way to ensure the survival of mankind. Therefore, Kazakhstan supports targeted and coordinated efforts by the international community to solve burning economic, social and environmental problems of the Central Asian region. We attach great significance to cooperation with the United Nations in water resources management, rehabilitation of the environmental disaster areas in the Semipalatinsk region and the Aral Sea, the preservation of biodiversity and the prevention of soil degradation and desertification. At the same time, Kazakhstan has every right to expect more effective actions in this field on the part of the United Nations. Unfortunately, our country, as well as other regional States, have yet to receive assistance that would speed up the solution of the environmental problems.

Kazakhstan is interested in strengthening fruitful cooperation with the United Nations to improve regional transportation infrastructure, including within the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA).

Kazakhstan is actively cooperating with its Eurasian Economic Community partners and considers that integration organization to be a very promising structure in terms of creating a common economic space for an extensive stretch of the Eurasian continent.

Our country stands for a more effective Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and for making its activities more goal-oriented. We express our hope that the upcoming Istanbul summit will become a milestone in ECO's activities.

The diplomatic efforts of Kazakhstan are also aimed at further strengthening political cooperation, trade and economic ties with the Central Asian States. We believe that a recently created new organization, the Central Asian Union, has an important role to play in this regard.

The legal status of the Caspian Sea is becoming an increasingly important problem within the context of current international relations. The lack of consensus among the five Caspian States on the legal status of this unique water basin seriously hampers the chances of turning the Caspian Sea into a zone of peace and genuine cooperation. The issues of unrestricted navigation, the protection of biodiversity and the environment, as well as demilitarization, remain very much on the agenda. Kazakhstan has consistently called for the continuation of the preparatory work for a multilateral convention based on the consensus among the five Caspian States in order to develop secure legal safeguards providing for long-term and stable cooperation and for creating favourable conditions for attracting investments to develop the mineral resources of the Caspian Sea.

In this regard, Kazakhstan attaches great significance to an agreement with Russia on the delimitation of the seabed in the northern part of the Caspian Sea in order to ensure the rights of the users of the seabed subsoil, as well as to the protocol on the modified median line in this part of the sea signed in June of this year.

We believe that the signing of these documents represents a breakthrough in the protracted process of the development of the legal status of the Caspian Sea. These important agreements give the green light to

foreign investments in the development of the enormous mineral resources of Kazakhstan's sector of the sea. This will allow our country to join the group of leading world producers of hydrocarbons. We intend to continue our cooperation with international financial institutions and companies, thereby ensuring a favourable investment climate in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan has assumed obligations with regard to the observation and protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Our country is a participant in major international human rights conventions and exerts every effort to implement them.

Democracy and human rights are part and parcel of political life in Kazakhstan, which has undertaken, in complex geopolitical conditions, reforms aimed at the liberalization of the economy and at the creation of a civil society. These reforms are unprecedented for a post-Soviet State.

The question of human rights, in the view of our country, should be on the agenda of inter-State cooperation. At the same time, we believe that unified standards and criteria should be used in assessing the human rights situation in a particular country. We believe that the prerogative and responsibility for the consideration of the state of affairs in this very sensitive area should rest with the United Nations. We are pinning great hopes on the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In an increasingly interdependent world, there is no alternative to multilateral cooperation. Only jointly can we work successfully for a world without wars and conflicts, a world based on justice and prosperity.

We have embraced with great enthusiasm the statement made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and express our support for his concept of joining efforts in order to address the key issues of modern times.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Right Honourable Jack Straw, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Straw (United Kingdom): In an imperfect world, our citizens need the United Nations as they have never needed it before. The United Nations has not resolved all conflicts by peaceful means, nor could it. The authority of the United Nations has to be underpinned by the force of arms. But the remarkable achievement of this body has been to make the fine language of its Charter a force for good beyond just words; by this the United Nations has raised the bar against the illegitimate use of violence, by States and now by terrorists. In doing so, the United Nations has saved lives by the million and saved millions more from fear, poverty and tyranny.

Without the United Nations, there could have been no salvation for the people of East Timor, no prospect of lasting peace in Sierra Leone, no one to help rebuild Afghanistan. Forty years ago, President John F. Kennedy predicted a world in which 25 States would have nuclear weapons. But the Non-Proliferation Treaty, supported by international safeguards, has ensured that this nightmare scenario has failed to materialize.

All this should serve to remind us of the critical role which the United Nations has to play in world affairs, under its excellent Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. It is the responsibility of all of us here in the Assembly to ensure that the legitimacy, the authority and the capacity of the United Nations to preserve peace and to help build prosperity is strengthened and not undermined.

Today, alongside the traditional threats to global peace and security, the United Nations and the world community face three rising challenges: failing States, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

The world saw in Afghanistan the graphic dangers of State failure, where order breaks down, law is undermined and anarchy takes over. We in the international community must accept our share of the blame for allowing that country to disintegrate. Al Qaeda and their evil creed were only too willing to take advantage. But we delude ourselves if we believe that the chaos in Afghanistan over much of the last decade is unique. In too many areas of the world, our fellow citizens are forced to live under the rule of gangs, without the security and freedoms which we all should be able to take for granted.

If we are serious about the concept of an international community, then, as Members of the United Nations, we must accept our responsibility to help prevent States from failing and to restore order where States have already collapsed.

The United Kingdom's own experience in Afghanistan, as the International Security Assistance

Force (ISAF) lead nation, working with the United Nations, shows what can be done; but we all know that much more needs to be done. We need a much more structured and methodical approach to this growing problem of failed and failing States.

But the tools are there. At Monterrey in March and at Johannesburg earlier this month, the world community has built on the Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty among the world's most disadvantaged people. We are backing this commitment with action. Between 1996 and 2006 the United Kingdom will have doubled its development assistance.

Together with the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO), we have within our grasp a new era of sustainable economic growth and prosperity, a stable political future for the developing world and a much more secure global environment.

But people cannot be freed from poverty unless they are also free from fear. Security is not an option; it is a necessity. Three years ago over half of Sierra Leone was under the control of rebels; over half the population was displaced; countless civilians had been murdered, abducted or horribly mutilated; a spiral of sickness and hunger was taking over. Now, thanks to United Nations and British intervention to end that decade-long civil war, people are returning home and rebuilding their shattered lives. But long-term commitment is necessary in situations like that.

As we found in Afghanistan, when we deal with failing States, we have to tackle the second challenge to international law and justice — that of global terrorism — as well.

All the nations of the world, and all its people — black, white, Buddhist, Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh — have a common interest in defeating terrorism. There must be no hiding places for terrorism or for terrorists; no hiding places for their money; and no semantic hiding places either. The distinction some claim between terrorists and freedom-fighters is false and dangerous. Their victims enjoy no such distinction. There must be no such distinctions either in international law.

Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) created new obligations on all of us. The United Kingdom has been honoured to chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee. There has been an overwhelmingly positive response. But, as we recall those who lost their lives on 11 September last year, we cannot relax our collective determination.

Alongside the threats from failing States and from terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses the greatest current threat to global security, and nowhere is the case for universal support for the enforcement of United Nations law stronger than in the field of weapons of mass destruction.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention comprise one of the world's most significant bodies of international law. For the past three decades, this corpus of law has ensured — with one infamous exception — that no States have resorted to these, the world's worst weapons.

That exception is Iraq. For two decades, Saddam Hussein's regime has defied and frustrated every attempt to enforce the international rule of law. Iraq is the only country to be condemned by the United Nations for breaching the Convention on Chemical Weapons. Iraq has fought wars of aggression against two neighbours, and has launched missile attacks against five countries in the region. Iraq has used poison gas against its own people. Saddam Hussein has persistently mocked the authority of the United Nations. No country has deceived every other country in the world as systematically and cynically as Iraq. And no country presents as fundamental a challenge to the United Nations as Iraq.

Every society, from the smallest village to the global community represented here in the General Assembly, must have rules, and every member of that community must accept responsibility for respecting and maintaining those rules. Without this, the very concept of community breaks down. So those of us who believe in an active international community cannot stand by and do nothing while Iraq continues to defy the will of the United Nations. All of us who believe in the United Nations have to make up our minds now about how to deal with Iraq. The authority of the United Nations itself is at stake.

We cannot let Iraq do grave damage to this Organization and the international order which it represents. We cannot let Iraq go on defying a decade of Security Council resolutions. If we do, we will find that our resolutions are dismissed by aggressors everywhere as mere words. We have spent 57 years

building this Organization beyond a talking shop. We cannot now let that work be undone.

There are times when hard choices have to be made. On Iraq, we have now reached such a moment. If we fail to deal with this challenge, the United Nations itself will be seriously weakened. And that would make the world a much more dangerous place.

As President Bush spelled out in his powerful speech to the Assembly here on Thursday, we have to be resolute in the face of Iraq's defiance and secure the will of the United Nations. We must require Iraq to re-admit inspectors, with unfettered access. We have not just an interest but a responsibility to ensure that Iraq complies fully with international law. We have to be clear to Iraq and to ourselves about the consequences which will flow from a failure by Iraq to meet its obligations.

And yes, in dealing with the threat posed by Iraq we must also tackle those other international challenges outlined so eloquently by Kofi Annan in his address.

Over the past year we have seen a further deterioration in security in Israel and in the occupied territories. There has never been a greater need for international involvement in the Middle East peace process to secure the outcome we all want to see: two States, Israel and Palestine living side by side within secure and recognized borders, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

In Kashmir, we should continue to urge both India and Pakistan to act with restraint, and to seek to resolve that long-running conflict.

At the end of the cold war we had all hoped that future generations would be able to enjoy a world where cooperation rather than conflict was the hallmark of international affairs. That goal is still within reach, if we are united in tackling State failure, in the war against terrorism and in confronting those threats of weapons of mass destruction.

The tasks facing the founders of this institution were no less intimidating. Yet their combination of high values and hard-headed realism created the greatest instrument in history for the avoidance of war. Our founders' achievement has been formidable. But the Organization now faces new and emerging threats. We have to confront those threats and be ever alive to the challenges which are out there to peace and justice across the world. All of us who believe in those principles of international law and justice have a duty to ensure that they are both upheld and enforced.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mircea Geoana, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Geoana (Romania) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your election to preside over the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. My congratulations go likewise to the outgoing president, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo, for his dedication and for a job well done. I wish also to echo earlier speakers in welcoming, very warmly, Switzerland as the newest Member of the Organization and Timor-Leste, which will be joining us shortly.

Global security models, which are in a process of change after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, have posed serious and unexpected challenges to the international community. We have been faced with tragic proof that our security is more fragile than we had imagined and that democracy and freedom have been under attack. We have been violently reminded that combating terrorism is a matter for us all.

The prompt and constructive response of my country, Romania, to the United Nations appeal for solidarity has been very clear. Our participation in the International Assistance Force for Afghanistan, approved by the Romanian Parliament in December 2001, clearly attests to our resolve to fulfil, in practice as well as in spirit, our commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

Following the adoption by the Security Council of its resolution 1373 (2001), we enacted legislation to prevent, in Romania, the financing of terrorist organizations and acts, and we have ratified the 12 United Nations conventions and protocols concerning terrorism.

We have been actively involved in operations in Afghanistan with our strategic allies and we are, together, tackling the consequences of the struggle against terrorism.

(*spoke in English*)

But have we, the international community, done enough? The Secretary-General, in his opening

statement, drew an uncompromising picture of the threats to peace, and rightly reminded us of our responsibilities.

Romania believes it is necessary to proceed unambiguously in condemning and actively combating all forms of terrorism and violent fanaticism through cooperation at the international level that is substantive, consistent and coherent. The financing of terrorism is an obvious target for action. Romania believes that the experience of regional liaison and joint operations in South-East Europe can be of use to international efforts to suppress the flow of funds to terrorist groups.

The terrorist threat calls for us to be even more vigilant in controlling the use and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as conventional weapons, such as landmines and small arms, which can fall — sometimes too often — into the wrong hands. In this context, Romania calls on Iraq to comply with existing Security Council resolutions and to allow United Nations inspectors to return, immediately and unconditionally, to enable further decisions to be taken relevant to the people of Iraq and the security and stability of the area. Romania was on the Security Council in 1990 when the first resolutions on Iraq were adopted and contributed to building consensus at that time. We believe that the Security Council must respond to the continued defiance of its resolutions firmly and resolutely. There can be no doubt as to my Government's stand should fears about possible threats to global security prove justified. As we have done in the past, we will stand alongside our allies and freedom-loving nations in the defence of world peace.

A strong response to Iraq's long-term defiance of the Security Council's authority is also called for because of the threat to global security from weapons of mass destruction. The temptation to apply these same principles to other, localized conflict situations should be resisted, especially when mechanisms exist for dialogue and peaceful resolution. While States have the right to exercise control over their own security, they also have a responsibility to ensure that security measures do not undermine the foundations of democracy. We can adapt to these new realities without sacrificing human rights and universal values. Indeed, through respect for civil liberties and the promotion of equal opportunity and social cohesion, we can help to remove some of the root causes of terrorism: resentment and frustration fuelled by poverty and marginalization.

This is a fundamental element of conflict prevention, but early warning and early intervention by the international community are not enough. The experiences of the last decade show that it is time to move away from ad hoc solutions for short-term problems towards an integrated and long-term approach to nation-building. By "integrated", I mean that the international response should be based on an efficient division of labour between the appropriate organizations, with a common mandate and a clear chain of command. By "long-term", I mean that international support should remain in place until security is seen to be durable and rehabilitation and local empowerment have become a reality.

The stabilization and rehabilitation process in Afghanistan is a test for the changing pattern of international cooperation. Ultimately, reconstruction efforts must be directed towards sustainability and ownership by the Afghan people. The recent attempt on President Karzai's life demonstrates the frailty of the current situation in Afghanistan. This and the attacks in Kabul and other cities are dramatic reminders of the price paid by too many Afghan generations for recovering their sovereignty and for winning the right to govern their country.

The intense effort that the United Nations has embarked upon in the democratic and physical reconstruction of the country is commendable. Romania believes that this commitment must be maintained as long as the dangers of a serious renewal of violence exist. Romania has already made a solid financial contribution to the international aid effort and is ready to offer further assistance, according to the requirements of the Afghan Government.

But efforts to aid Afghanistan should not stop at that country's borders. Stability for that country and the region will be assured only through a broader vision for the development of the whole of Central Asia. We need to find a way to link Europe and Central Asia by working up an integrated strategy that will reinforce democracy and bring economic prosperity not only across Europe, but to Eurasia as well. A first step must be to put an end to the "frozen conflicts" in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

The positive developments in South-East Europe show what can be achieved when the international

community takes action in a coherent and coordinated way. The United Nations and its international partners, notably the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, have worked tirelessly to help to reconstitute societies based on the rule of law and ethnic tolerance, but the process is not yet complete. It is vital that this decisive electoral autumn show beyond doubt that modern democracy has taken root in the western Balkans. By ensuring free and fair elections, political leaders in the region should keep their countries on the right path to European integration. As Romania draws closer to achieving its Euro-Atlantic integration ambitions, we will continue to contribute actively to efforts to break down the remaining divisions in South-East Europe and to speed up the integration of the whole region into the European mainstream.

The violent conflicts over the last decade awoke the world to the need for action against the horror of war crimes. The entry into force on 1 July of the International Criminal Court Statute represents a very significant step forward. Romania ratified the International Criminal Court Statute this year and remains deeply committed to ensuring that the Court function effectively as a viable and necessary instrument of international law. In this spirit, we encourage ongoing discussions, which should clarify some of the outstanding issues.

The danger that the violence in the Middle East will escalate beyond control cannot be ignored. My recent discussions with political leaders from the region have reinforced my conviction that it is crucial to find a way to renounce the logic of war in favour of a logic of peace. We call on the parties to engage in serious negotiations for a peaceful, comprehensive and lasting solution. Their success or failure will have consequences far beyond their own immediate region, impacting upon what might be termed the wider Middle East, encompassing the entire region from Central Asia to North Africa.

The two serious challenges for the twenty-first century are fighting terrorism and new security threats, on the one hand, and making globalization work for everyone everywhere, on the other. In both, the United Nations has a decisively important role to play. We have reached the point where we must address the global agenda in a way that finally meets people's expectations and achieves early results. We must deliver in a coherent and pragmatic way on the commitments taken at Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg, as well as other major United Nations conferences, such as the special session on children. We must design an urgent, clear and encouraging response to the humanitarian needs of Africa and promote conditions for the sustainable development of the African continent.

Tangible progress depends upon a new paradigm of cooperation between stakeholders of globalization, States, corporations, international organizations and, of course, civil society. Efficient implementation depends upon a new architecture of global governance that is fitted to today's realities and a renewed sense of responsibility among all States. Finally, success in achieving the millennium development goals depends upon a strict and verifiable system for monitoring implementation. A new sense of participation and partnership must energize our common contribution. In this respect, We welcome President Bush's announcement that the United States will rejoin the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

The graduation of the Central European countries from transition economies to membership of the European Union in the few years to come is proof that democracy with a functioning market economy and an open society does work. But there is a price, and that is the difficult decisions, politically and socially, of successful transition.

We have been fortunate to have European Union financial support and know-how, which have been vital in maintaining the momentum and the public acceptance of sometimes painful reform programmes. In return, we will do the same by sharing the burden of international responsibility and assistance. We have not only a moral and historic, but also a strategic, responsibility to address the needs of the poor and disadvantaged in our region and beyond. Discontent and disillusionment breed instability, which in turn gives terrorism fertile conditions in which to flourish.

Governments, business and civil society have a unique opportunity to accelerate economic development through the use of the powerful new information and communication technologies. In preparation for the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society, to be held at Geneva in 2003 and at Tunis in 2005, Romania will host, from 7 to 9

November this year, a regional conference at the ministerial level organized jointly with the International Telecommunication Union and the Economic Commission for Europe. Our aim is to draw up a preliminary plan of action with specific mechanisms for bridging the digital divide.

The Security Council is the linchpin of the United Nations. Romania believes that we must redouble our efforts to promote reform of that body. The composition of the Council should be more representative of our global membership and should reflect more accurately the realities of the global balance of power today. Romania's candidature for a Council seat in 2004-2005 is motivated by our deep commitment to the United Nations as a credible and efficient contributor to peace and stability around the world.

What will we take home from this session? We need to reflect on how to eliminate the habit of ad hoc cooperation. We need to think creatively and to craft continuous patterns of teamwork, and we should be more receptive to what people want from the United Nations. That is how we can best live up to our commitments and overcome what is seen as the handicap of international organizations: the discrepancy between words and deeds. Let us leave this session determined to work on mapping out pledges and achievements in a way that will add vigour to our words and reinforce our credibility. That, after all, is the source of our unique strength.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Joschka Fischer, Deputy Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Fischer (Germany) (*spoke in German; English text provided by the delegation*): First of all, I should like to wish you every success, Mr. President, in your responsible office. We are delighted that you, a representative of our Czech neighbours, will preside over the General Assembly this year. I also express my sincere thanks to the outgoing President.

I endorse the statement of the Danish presidency of the European Union.

One year ago, the world was shaken by the terror of 11 September, which was disdainful of human life. Civilian aircraft were transformed into guided missiles whose deployment had been planned without any regard for human life. The devastating consequences destroyed families, shattered hopes and tore people apart, regardless of their age, gender or religious affiliation. Three days ago, we remembered the victims in a moving ceremony here in New York. We have not forgotten the images of 11 September; we have not recovered from the shock. Our solidarity with the United States is unbroken. We understand our American friends. Just like them, we are not prepared to live under the sword of Damocles that terrorism represents.

The murderous attack on the people and the Administration of the United States was also an attack on all open societies. Countless States mourn their countrymen among the thousands of World Trade Center victims. The attack could have struck any open society, but the terrorists consciously chose the United States as a symbol of freedom and democracy.

We know that the new totalitarian challenge is also directed at us all. Since 11 September 2001, the community of nations has had to look at the question of peace and security at the dawn of the twenty-first century from a whole new angle. We will not be able to negotiate with terrorists like Osama bin Laden. His aim is to kill as many innocent people as possible, thus creating the maximum degree of terror and fear. If the terrorists succeed in acquiring weapons that are yet more horrific, they will deploy them against us all without hesitation. Therefore, we must work together in the international coalition against terrorism to overcome and destroy that international terrorist network. The highly dangerous combination of religious hatred, smouldering regional conflicts, terrorist attacks and the danger of the deployment of weapons of mass destruction must be prevented at any price.

But, above all else, we must not forget: on the one hand, terrorism must be fought resolutely by the military and police; on the other, we need to resolve the political and social conflicts quite rightly emphasized in the Millennium Declaration, as they form the breeding ground for the emergence of terrorism. Opting for one approach and neglecting the other risks failure.

Our common goal is for the people in our countries to be able to live in safety and freedom, and without want. To achieve that, we need a system of global cooperative security that, unlike the former bipolarity of the cold war, includes all levels of global policy relevant to security: the relations among great

Powers and their alliances as well as the potential danger of regional crises and the threat posed by asymmetrical conflicts. For one thing is clearer than ever after 11 September: terrorism threatens world peace just as much as civil war and regional conflicts. Such a system, therefore, must not be toothless, but rather must function in all three fields through reliable verification systems and enforceable sanctions mechanisms. I am convinced that developing such a comprehensive system of global cooperative security will be our central political task for the twenty-first century.

This problem can be solved only through multilateralism — that is, if nations work together. Terrorism does not stop at national borders, and shaping globalization is a task that Governments can no longer tackle alone. Thus, the United Nations has a major role to play in developing this security system; it is the most important forum for establishing global rules. No other organization has comparable legitimacy and credibility. Decisively strengthening its ability to act by continuing the reform path of the Secretary-General is, therefore, a central focus of German foreign policy.

The developments in Iraq fill us with grave concern. Saddam Hussein's regime is a brutal dictatorship. Under his leadership, Iraq has attacked its neighbours Iran and Kuwait, has fired missiles at Israel and has used poison gas against Iran and against its own Kurdish population. The regime is horrendous for the Iraqi people and a risk to the region. For that reason, an effective containment policy and reliable military control of the no-fly zones have been implemented and a strict sanctions regime against Iraq has been introduced since the Gulf War.

The regime in Baghdad must not own or produce the means for mass destruction or the systems to deliver them. Despite binding demands from the Security Council, Saddam Hussein refuses to provide credible and verifiable answers to the pressing questions posed by the community of nations regarding his weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, the United Nations not only must maintain the pressure on the Iraqi Government but also must intensify it.

We welcome the fact that President Bush, in his most recent speech, turned towards the Security Council. Even if it becomes very difficult, we must do everything possible to find a diplomatic solution.

The Security Council and Member States must make it unequivocally clear to Baghdad that the unrestricted and unconditional re-admission of the weapons inspectors is the only way to avert a great tragedy for Iraq and the entire region. The Iraqi Government must implement all relevant Security Council resolutions in their entirety and without delay.

We do not, however, want any automatism leading to the use of military force. The fight against international terrorism remains perilous. We have not yet managed to fully stabilize Afghanistan. Explosive regional conflicts in Kashmir, the Middle East and the Caucasus must be resolved or at least effectively contained.

Certain central questions arise for us. Have all economic and political means of pressure been truly exhausted? What consequences would military intervention have? What would it mean for regional stability? What effect would it have on the Middle East conflict? Are there new, concrete findings and facts? Does the situation as assessed justify the taking of a great risk, namely, taking responsibility for peace and stability in the entire region for years or even decades to come? Would such action gain the consent of the Arab neighbours? What consequences would it have for the continuation of the global coalition against terrorism? In the face of these open questions, we feel deep scepticism with regard to military action and thus hold to our approach.

I would like to pose the further question of whether a peaceful solution to the question of the Middle East could not contribute considerably more to the establishment of regional stability, to the successful fight against terrorism and to the effective control and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. In that way, would the regime in Baghdad not be isolated much more effectively, thus generating political pressure for change? Would this cooperative approach to finding a new order for the region not be a more promising way to bring democracy to the Middle East — one that would be supported by the regional Powers?

Nowhere is the connection between terrorism and regional conflict more obvious than in the Near and Middle East. The breakthrough to peace is therefore of paramount importance in that region of the world. The consensus among the international community of nations on the Middle East question is now greater than

ever. We must all pull together to achieve the goal envisaged by President Bush for 2005, that of two States, Israel and a democratic Palestine, living as neighbours within secure and recognized borders. The European Union has devised a road map to achieve that goal. An early conference on the Middle East could help to build bridges and accelerate the process. Together with our European Union partners, we are ready to make a considerable contribution in that respect.

A comprehensive peace in the Middle East must also include Lebanon and Syria. Saudi Arabia's significant initiative contains the assurance that the Arab world would then also be ready to fully normalize its relations with Israel.

Without a just and lasting solution to regional conflicts, we will not be able to eliminate the recruitment base for terrorists and thus successfully counter the asymmetrical threat. Afghanistan is an obvious example here. The Taliban system has collapsed there and the Al Qaeda network has largely been destroyed. We are still a long way from being able to call the situation in the country stable and secure, but progress can be noted. The implementation of the provisions of the Bonn Conference agreement began with the formation of a legitimate Interim Administration. The process that was launched on the Petersberg was taken to the next level with the convening in June of the emergency loya jirga. For the first time in years, the Afghan people have the chance to lead a life of dignity based on self-determination.

The people of Afghanistan will only grow in courage, however, when they see and feel that the international community is also standing by its pledges for the reconstruction of their country. The commitments of the donor countries must materialize in the form of concrete projects.

A system of global cooperative security must be based on a comprehensive security concept. This must embrace not only military security but also the economy, human rights, democracy and culture.

"To achieve a safer world, we must create a better world": that is how President Bush summed up the situation in his impressive speech to the German Bundestag last May. Shaping cooperative global security therefore also means shaping a new global economic order. Account must be taken of the needs of all — the developing and the developed world alike. Resources must be more fairly distributed and poorer countries must be able to participate in international trade and take advantage of the opportunities of globalization. This will necessitate free market access for all, as well as the realization of economic and political freedoms and a just and reliable legal framework.

We must not close our eyes to the problems of Africa, in particular. The food situation in the South of the continent is a particular source of concern. Countless people are going hungry and comprehensive assistance is needed there. In Zimbabwe, however, the former granary of Africa, a wholly irresponsible policy is the reason for the difficult situation. In Zimbabwe, hunger is caused principally not by failed harvests or droughts but by self-destructive governance — a policy of keeping a grip on power through the suffering of the people. Such a policy relies upon the fact that the international community's humanitarian conscience and readiness to assume responsibility will reduce the consequences. We must hold this policy up against the benchmarks defined by Africa itself in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Climate and energy policy is a key component of the new global economic order. The Kyoto Protocol can be seen as a milestone in global climate protection. I am delighted that several countries have recently announced plans to ratify the Protocol, and hope that this will happen as soon as possible so that it can enter into force. In the long term, a sensible energy policy — and that means, above all, the promotion of renewable energy sources and economical energy consumption — is the best solution to the climate problem. Work must therefore start today. Let us not forget that difficult economic and ecological problems, with their social and humanitarian repercussions, will increasingly endanger stability and security too.

The protection of human rights must be one of the pillars of a global security system. All efforts to secure peace will fail if human rights are not protected and made a reality. We need a binding global set of values to prevent and overcome conflicts that emerge through inequality, injustice and the denial of freedom. Here, too, States are called upon to play a decisive and active role. Moreover, we must be careful today to ensure that basic human rights are not annulled under the pretext of combating terrorism. No one has the right to an "anti-terrorism bonus".

Cooperative global security will have to measure up to the binding legal framework in which it is embedded. It is imperative for the globalization process to be flanked by a growing set of international rules, because international law and the rule of law constitute the indispensable foundations for peaceful and ordered coexistence. That is why the establishment of the International Criminal Court is so important to us. Its Statute entered into force on 1 July; Germany, along with all the other members of the European Union, is among the 79 States to have ratified it. The Assembly of States Parties gave the green light this week to the establishment of the Court. Next spring we will celebrate its opening in The Hague. The International Criminal Court will start work as soon as possible and as efficiently as possible. But it must not be weakened in its work from the outset.

My country is applying for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2003-2004. Germany wants to play an active role in developing the international security system within the United Nations along the lines that I have outlined. I would like to ask all members for their vote in the election on 27 September.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Mr. Pérez Roque (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): A year ago, the General Assembly had to be postponed because of the ruthless crime committed on 11 September. There was then a worldwide wave of solidarity towards the people of the United States and, particularly, towards the families of the almost 3,000 innocent victims of that unjustifiable terrorist attack.

The conditions were created for setting up a genuine international alliance under the auspices and leadership of the United Nations, with absolute respect for the purposes and principles enshrined in its Charter. Nearly all countries, above and beyond ideological, political, cultural and religious differences, expressed our willingness to collaborate actively with this endeavour of unmistakable common interest.

However, another vision was imposed. In an unusual fashion, it was stated that whoever did not support the war decided upon by a single country would then be on the side of terrorism. It was even announced to the Security Council that that country reserved the right to launch future attacks on its own against other nations. A unilateral war was then unleashed, whose death toll is still unknown to us and whose most tangible consequence is probably the blow to the credibility of the United Nations and to multilateralism as a means to cope with the complex challenges currently ahead of us.

What is the outcome today? There are greater feelings of hatred, vengeance and insecurity, which are not helpful in the fight against terrorism. Dangerous xenophobic and discriminatory tendencies threaten the existence of a plural and democratic world. There has been a step backward in the field of public freedoms and civil rights.

In the meantime, there is a lack of political will by certain powers to rigorously apply, without selectivity and without double standards, the 12 existing international legal instruments on terrorism. In addition, no advances have been made in the definition, so indispensable today, of State terrorism.

For its part, Cuba — a victim of terrorist acts for over four decades, which stated its opinions in the Assembly with poise and firmness and unwaveringly condemned the crime of September 11 and terrorism as such, but which also opposed the war out of ethical considerations and the respect for international law — signed and ratified the 12 international conventions to combat terrorism and adopted a national law to fight this scourge. It has cooperated fully with the work of the committee set up for such purposes by the Security Council and, at the bilateral level, it proposed to the United States Government the adoption of a programme to combat terrorism, which was, incomprehensibly, rejected by that Government.

Until today, and despite the fact that it has not developed and has no intention ever to develop nuclear weapons, Cuba has not been a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, for it is an insufficient and discriminatory instrument allowing the establishment of a club of nuclear powers without any concrete disarmament commitments. However, as a signal of the clear political will of the Cuban Government and its commitment to an effective disarmament process that ensures world peace, our country has decided to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In doing so, we reaffirm our hope that all nuclear weapons will finally be totally eliminated under strict international verification.

In addition, and despite the fact that the only nuclear power in the Americas pursues a policy of hostility towards Cuba that does not rule out the use of force, Cuba will also ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, that was signed by our country in 1995.

On a day like today, I would like to repeat Cuba's remarks at the last session of the General Assembly:

> "Only under the leadership of the United Nations will we be able to defeat terrorism. Cooperation, and not war, is the way. The coordination of actions, and not imposition ... is the method. ...
>
> "Cuba reiterates its condemnation of terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations. Cuba reiterates that it will not allow its territory ever to be used for terrorist acts against the people of the United States or of any other country." (*A/56/PV.50, pp. 21 and 22*)

Why have we not seen the same zeal with which the war in Afghanistan was unleashed in the search for a just and lasting solution for peace in the Middle East? Why have some refrained from uttering even a single word to condemn the aggressions against the territory of Palestine and the crimes against its people? Why has there not been any condemnation of the selective assassinations and the use of the armed forces against the civilian population? Why are there assurances of impunity for the actions of the Israeli army, thus tying the hands of the Security Council? Why have there not been any firm actions to implement the Security Council resolutions that ensure the proclamation of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital? Why is the only superpower on the planet acting differently from one case to the other? Why is there no end to the suffering of the Palestinian mothers whose children are also murdered, like the innocent people on 11 September? These questions should be answered by those who in this Hall carry upon their shoulders the responsibility for what is currently happening in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories.

A new war against Iraq already seems inevitable; an aggravation of the situation of constant aggression that that people has lived in over the last ten years. The buzzword now is "pre-emptive war", in open violation of the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Charter.

Cuba defends principles, not expedience. Therefore, although its supporters may feel upset, it emphatically opposes this war. Cuba is not driven by an anti-American spirit, even when its Government maintains and strengthens a 40-year-old blockade against our people. But refraining from telling the truth out of cowardice or political calculation is not characteristic of Cuban revolutionaries. Therefore, Cuba hereby states that it opposes a new military action against Iraq. It does so while recalling that at one point it supported the Security Council resolution asking the Iraqi Government to end the occupation of Kuwait.

We believe that the development of weapons of mass destruction today would be insane, because the only possible way that we envision for world peace is through general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, and the rechannelling of the money currently spent on weapons to address the dire socio-economic problems of humankind.

The Arab countries have been emphatic in their rejection of this war, and most European countries do not approve of it. The international community is increasingly concerned about the announcement of a new war on the basis of unconfirmed allegations and disregarding the obvious reality that Iraq cannot pose a danger to the United States.

If the United States Government unleashes a new war against Iraq, either by imposing it on the Security Council or by deciding upon it unilaterally in opposition to international public opinion, we will bear witness to the emergence of a century of unilateralism and the forced retirement of the United Nations. It will then seem that the cold war years — with its distant memory of bipolarism, mistakes and contradictions — were not as futile and perilous as the era that is now inexorably looming over the world.

The United Nations has to be saved. Cuba defends the need both for its preservation and for its most profound reform and democratization, but all this must be accomplished through respect for its Charter and not by rewriting it or distorting its purposes and principles. The General Assembly must ultimately be allowed to play the role laid down for it in the Charter. The Security Council has to be rescued from the disrepute and doubts that are so rightly weighing it

down, so that it may become a truly representative body. I am talking about the presence of the third world and not about military power as a justification for membership of a democratic body; I am talking about eliminating the veto and other antidemocratic practices from a transparent body; and I am talking about putting an end to the secret conspiracies and to the substantive decisions made in private by a mere few and then imposed on the rest.

Today, when it is more threatened than ever, Cuba strongly defends the need to preserve multilateralism in international relations. That is why we have witnessed in frustration the disappointing completion of the negotiations for the establishment of the International Criminal Court, which Cuba supported on the understanding that it would be a truly impartial, non-selective, efficient and independent body to complement national justice systems. To use the Security Council as a tool to amend de facto the international treaty that gave birth to the Court, or to impose upon others humiliating bilateral agreements, compelling them to violate their international obligations deriving from that instrument, is not only arrogant, but also irresponsible.

The International Criminal Court now vaunted is not the body that we need and have fought for, subject as it is to hegemonic political interests and already a potential victim of manipulation, and bound from its inception to the decisions of a permanent member of the Security Council. What real international justice can be expected of a body that lacks a definition of the crime of aggression or that will receive instructions from the Security Council either to call off or to postpone a trial indefinitely at the request of one of its permanent members? Who can guarantee that the Court will not end up becoming an instrument at the service of interventionism and domination by the most powerful countries?

Cuba reiterates here today what it expressed at the recent Johannesburg Summit: a reworking of international financial institutions is called for. A legitimate replacement for the International Monetary Fund is called for. It is essential that the work of the World Bank be aimed at supporting the genuine exercise by over 130 third world countries of their right to development. It is essential that the United Nations system be provided with new financial resources to fight poverty, underdevelopment, disease and famine. It is essential that the World Trade Organization be rescued from the interests of a handful of rich and powerful countries and transformed into an instrument at the service of a fair and equitable international trading system.

The meagre results derived from the Monterrey and Johannesburg conferences and the justified wave of annoyance and uncertainty in their wake once again raise the issue of the lack of political will by the major industrialized Powers to relinquish a portion of their privileges in order to produce a real change in the unfair and unsustainable world order that is currently visiting impoverishment and hopelessness upon two thirds of the planet's population.

I recognize that Cuba's remarks may not be accepted by some in this Hall. I even understand that they could be interpreted as a tirade against a country in particular. However, that is not the reason. Words must be used to uphold the truth and that is what Cuba has done and will always do. We are a small, noble people that long ago proclaimed that, for all Cubans, "motherland is humankind".

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Oman, His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdulla.

Mr. Abdulla (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to offer, on behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its current session. We assure you of our fullest cooperation towards achieving the noble goals and objectives to which we collectively aspire for the benefit of mankind and the maintenance of international peace and security.

In this connection, we wish to express our appreciation for the ongoing tireless efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan on behalf of international peace and security, the rule of international law and the work of the Organization in this regard. We also thank him for his annual report, which details the achievements of the United Nations, the obstacles ahead and its vision of the future, embodying the conscience and aspirations of the international community.

I also take this opportunity to welcome the accession of the Swiss Federation and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to membership of the United Nations. We are confident that their membership will

be an important asset in the promotion of the work of this Organization in achieving its noble goals of international peace and security.

Here in the renowned city of New York, we are commemorating the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Once again, we would like to express our deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims of that senseless attack. We wish also to reaffirm our solidarity with the United States of America in fighting all forms of terror against innocent people everywhere.

The Middle East is experiencing increased tension due to a serious regression in the peace process on all tracks, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian track. The primary causes of this are the Israeli Government's deviation from the fair principles and foundations established at the 1991 Madrid Conference, and the desire of successive Israeli Governments since 1996 to impose peace through excessive force. This runs counter to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to the formula of land for peace. Israel is pursuing a policy of procrastination and intimidation and is circumventing international instruments and agreements signed by the parties concerned. This has resulted in a further escalation of Palestinian resistance, by all factions and in all forms, to Israeli occupation.

My Government condemns all terrorist acts, regardless of their motivation and deplores all acts of violence against innocent civilians, whether perpetrated by the Palestinian or the Israeli side. Events have proven that the use of force against the Palestinian people will not lead to a fair solution, to an end to violence or to security, as the Israeli Government claims; nor will it end the legitimate Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation. The end of such resistance is contingent upon the end of Israeli occupation.

All Arab States have affirmed that the achievement of a peace based on the principles of international law and justice is our strategic choice, and we have exerted great efforts to that end, the latest being the Arab peace initiative adopted unanimously at the Beirut Summit held last March. This historic initiative was widely welcomed by the international community because it is in conformity with international legitimacy and principles, and in compliance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which demand the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and the granting to Palestinian refugees of the right to return, in return for the recognition of Israel by Arab States and the normalization of relations with it.

Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) sets out the concept of establishing a recognized Palestinian State peacefully coexisting alongside the State of Israel. In that connection, my Government calls on the international community, especially Security Council members, to shoulder their responsibility to ensure that the Israeli Government will respect and implement relevant international resolutions and respond seriously to Arab and international efforts.

My Government supports the just position taken by the Syrian Arab Republic with respect to regaining the occupied Golan Heights and its request for Israeli withdrawal to the line of 4 June 1967. In the same vein, we support the position of the Republic of Lebanon with regard to recovering the occupied Shab'a farms area and its demand that Israel fully implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory, including the Shab'a farms area.

The overall humanitarian situation in Iraq remains tragic due to the ongoing economic sanctions imposed on Iraq since August 1990. Consequently, my Government emphasizes the importance of a Security Council review of the international sanctions policy imposed on countries, a review that would lead to easing the humanitarian harm that befalls peoples, and that would take into consideration the status of a targeted Government's implementation of international resolutions.

My Government reiterates its call upon the Security Council to put an end to the human suffering in Iraq, and in that regard we call for the continuation of dialogue and discussions between Iraq and the United Nations with a view to Iraq fulfilling its remaining international commitments. The Security Council needs to put in place a clear-cut and specific mechanism telling Iraq what it needs to do to end the tragic suffering and to arrive at a final and complete lifting of the economic sanctions.

We feel optimistic and pleased at the accomplishments of the Arab Summit in Beirut, especially in terms of its positive climate in creating a

spirit of understanding and rapprochement between Iraq and Kuwait. In that connection, my Government welcomes the Iraqi initiative to return the Kuwaiti national archives and urges the Iraqi Government to persist with the option of continuous and constructive dialogue and serious consultations to fulfil its unfulfilled commitments under Security Council resolutions, specifically relating to prisoners of war and missing Kuwaiti and third-country citizens. In that regard, we urge the Iraqi Government to cooperate with the Tripartite Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to deal with this humanitarian issue.

My Government is confident that the Iraqi file cannot be closed without continuous diplomatic efforts by all, through United Nations channels and in any other political way available. We thus find no justification for any military operation against Iraq. We therefore welcome the statement made by President George W. Bush of the United States at the outset of the general debate, in which he spoke of addressing the Iraqi crisis through the Security Council.

My Government follows with great interest and optimism the official contacts maintained between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the dispute on the three islands belonging to the Emirates, Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. We hope that these contacts and negotiations will lead to an agreement on an effective mechanism for the settlement of this issue.

My country, along with other countries in the region, is interested in the establishment of security and stability in the Indian subcontinent. In that regard, we place high value on international efforts to contain the conflict between India and Pakistan, and we urge those countries to benefit from international diplomacy to agree on an effective mechanism leading to a peaceful and final settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

Regarding Afghanistan, we welcome the return of that country to the international family, and we look forward to the establishment of security and stability in its territory under the supervision of a Government reflecting the aspirations of all parties in Afghanistan. My Government values international efforts to assist the Afghan Government and the international community's ongoing financial and technical assistance for rebuilding the country and providing for the basic needs of the Afghan people after so many years of suffering and war.

My country condemns all forms of terrorism. In line with the purposes of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, we reaffirm our support for international efforts to fight terrorism and our commitment to the relevant international resolutions, including Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), and all relevant Islamic, Arab and international treaties and agreements to which my country has acceded. My delegation expresses its readiness to cooperate with the United Nations in fighting international terrorism, in accordance with the principles of international law and the principle of national sovereignty, and taking into account the need to distinguish between terrorism and legitimate resistance against occupation. The Sultanate of Oman supports the call for the convening under United Nations auspices of an international conference on terrorism in order to agree on a clear international definition of terrorism and to set up a mechanism to address and eradicate terrorism.

My country deeply believes that the accession and commitment of States to treaties and conventions on disarmament will strengthen and preserve peace and security on the regional and international levels. Consequently, the signature of the Sultanate of Oman remains on the record as a State party to such treaties.

Based on that principle, we emphasize the need to take practical measures to make the Middle East a region free from all weapons of mass destruction. In that connection, we request Israel to join all relevant treaties, beginning with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and to subject its nuclear facilities to the safeguards inspection regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That would create a positive climate and put an end to arms proliferation in the region.

My country calls on the United Nations to continue its broad-based efforts to rid the world completely of all types of weapons of mass destruction. We urge nuclear-weapon States in particular to formulate time-bound programmes to achieve that goal as soon as possible. In that regard, my Government commends the United States and the Russian Federation for having reached an agreement on the reduction of their nuclear arsenals.

My country is currently presiding over the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and hosted the twenty-second session of the Supreme Council of the GCC, held in December 2001 in Muscat. That summit resulted in the adoption of many decisions and resolutions and other achievements, including the signing of an economic agreement among member States and an agreement on a standardized customs duty of 5 per cent on all imported goods. That agreement will take effect when a customs union among member States comes into force at the beginning of next year. The Council also took a decision on a unified Gulf currency. That will enhance economic structures, facilitate differential trade and increase the Gulf's competitiveness with other regional economic groups, in addition to promoting the labour market and the private sector in our countries. It will also attract more investors and commercial partnerships within the great Arab region, with other friendly States, and in world markets.

Among the prominent results of the Muscat summit was our leaders' decision to invite the Republic of Yemen to join a number of Gulf joint establishments. That decision was taken based on the mutual desire and deep belief of both parties that the incorporation of Yemen into the GCC in a gradual and calculated manner will conform to the economic and social needs and development circumstances of Yemen and will serve the common interests of the region.

We are working to preserve the environment. We have a strong record of achievements and measures taken by our Government to plan national environmental protection strategies. However, it is no secret that many obstacles threaten our environment internally, regionally and internationally. Among the challenges is the lack of sufficient water to cope with population growth, which will endanger our population and will increase the risk of desertification, making it necessary that we intensify scientific research and allocate the resources necessary for that purpose.

We are happy to have participated in the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, and we wish to emphasize our interest in the outcome documents adopted at the conference. We also take this opportunity to emphasize the need to respect United Nations resolutions and decisions as well as the Charter.

The President: I remind members of the 15-minute time limit on statements, and urge them to adjust their statement to conform to that agreed limit. I now call on His Excellency Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Mr. Tuomioja (Finland): One year after the terrible attacks of 11 September, we commemorate the innocent victims of those crimes. The best way we can honour their memory is by taking up and acting upon all the many-faceted challenges that terrorism and other threats pose to human security. The world has changed irrevocably, although we cannot as yet say exactly how. We do not even know if our immediate reaction a year ago has been successfully put to use to make the world a better and safer place in which to live.

Afghanistan is no longer a base for global terrorism, and joint efforts to uproot terrorist networks are making progress, but the threat of new attacks has not been eliminated. At some stage we will also reach the limit of what can be done through military force and police action alone to stop terrorism. Even where the use of military force is clearly necessary and justified, as it was against Al Qaeda and the Taliban, it is never an adequate answer. In Afghanistan we are now faced with the need to use a full range of civilian crisis management capabilities, as well as with the need for a long-term commitment to reconstruction and the development of a stable and drug-free economy, and to enable democracy and respect for human rights to take root in a country that has suffered from war and strife for decades. And Afghanistan is only one of many places in today's world where such a commitment from the international community is needed.

We must also come to grips with conditions in which some people can regard even terrorism as justified. To say that does not imply any understanding for indiscriminate terrorism. Terrorism is a crime whose perpetrators must be brought to justice irrespective of their motives.

It is vitally important to underline the need to strengthen the rule of law. When terrorists attack democracy, humanity and justice, we should not and cannot fight it with means that are in conflict with those basic values that the terrorists are attacking. It is time to review frankly the measures taken after 11

September and to rectify any excesses that are not acceptable in societies based on freedom and justice.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has been in gestation for many years, and its creation can be regarded as one of the major achievements of the United Nations. It was not created primarily to deal with terrorism, but the importance of the ICC has obviously grown, not diminished, since 11 September. The ICC is a long-standing goal of Finland and the European Union, and we must not allow it to be undermined. The ICC must not become an issue of international dispute. We must safeguard it as an effective and independent judicial institution so that we can convince those States that remain outside it to join us in making it truly universal.

Terrorism is only one of many new threats to our security that are no longer linked to the threat of traditional war between nation-States.

In a world where our entire national defence policies and our efforts to build collective security have been based on the need to wage or deter traditional war, we now need new and fresh thinking. It is not only that military power has become partly impotent in delivering security. It is also evident that we cannot contain these threats through isolation or by acting unilaterally.

The United Nations and its Security Council have global responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Human lives are equally valuable all over the world. People in crisis situations need the protection and the action of the international community. Individual and minor crises can turn into major threats to international peace and security. Member States must give the United Nations the wherewithal that is necessary for meaningful action in preventing crises, managing conflicts and building peace after conflicts. Action needs true commitment to multilateralism, which must exceed national interests and unilateralism. Multilateralism cannot be exercised à la carte whenever convenient. Global interests require global action.

An undeniable success story in the history of the United Nations is the Organization's peacekeeping activities. Countless lives have been saved by United Nations peacekeeping operations. But we know, too, that possibly even more lives have been lost if and when the United Nations has not been able or allowed to operate. The reason has been the lack of political will or the prevalence of national interests in the Security Council. I would like to reiterate that the Security Council is mandated to act on behalf of all Member States.

The concept of peacekeeping has evolved considerably during the existence of the United Nations from purely military operations into versatile, complex and continuous efforts that extend in some cases to nation-building. A growing element in them is civilian crisis management. This should be further strengthened. Crisis management in its whole continuum should also be based on broad cooperation and compatibility. Present complex crises are often too demanding for any one organization to deal with. All regional organizations should work closely together with the United Nations and other organizations sharing the burden of maintaining international peace and security.

The Middle East remains the region where our concerns are most concentrated. The conflict between Israel and Palestine has, if anything, worsened. We support all efforts of the "quartet" to get the peace process working again on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions. We support the Palestinian administration's effort at reform, which we have rightly demanded must be undertaken, and we expect a one-hundred-per-cent effort from it to stop all terrorist activities. At the same time, the Palestinians must be given the prospect of a clear commitment and a timetable for the creation of an independent and viable Palestinian State. The Palestinian administration has to be given the resources and conditions with which it can fulfil the requirements of what the international community demands of it and of what the Palestinian people have the right to expect.

Without progress in the Middle East peace process, any military action in the region can have extremely dangerous and unforeseen consequences. It is imperative that efforts to get Iraq to abide unconditionally with all the resolutions of the Security Council remain the responsibility of the United Nations.

When the United Nations was founded, the world's population was 2.4 billion. Now we are more than 6 billion, and population growth, while slowly levelling off, will bring that number to at least 10 billion before stabilizing. This is a huge challenge for mankind. We have only a few decades, at most, to

bring our economic, production and societal models to conform to the exigencies of sustainable development. But this is not only an environmental challenge. Nations and peoples must learn to live and to act together in an ever-shrinking world where no one can manage on his own.

In a rapidly globalizing world, the need for keen international cooperation becomes all the more evident. Decisions taken in one part of the world have many effects elsewhere. This can quickly lead to an ever-widening gap and fragmentation between countries and within countries. Comprehensive implementation of the Millennium Declaration will make an important impact on narrowing that gap. A positive example of the means we can employ to meet the goals of the Declaration is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which demonstrates the genuine desire of the African nations to take responsibility for their future. Finland attaches great importance to the implementation of NEPAD.

Globalization has wealth-creating potential through the international division of labour and a more efficient use of resources. It can increase individual freedom and make societies more open. But, on the other hand, it is incontestable that globalization has not benefited everybody or every country in an equal manner. Globalization can bring risks and threats to the environment, core labour standards and trade unions, and it can challenge national and minority cultures. It can also be socially damaging. On the whole, however, globalization is not only inevitable but also potentially positive. The United Nations has an important role in managing and harnessing globalization for the benefit of all. We the Member States must fully participate in that work.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Sir Rabbie Namaliu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Papua New Guinea.

Sir Rabbie Namaliu (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the people and the Government of Papua New Guinea, I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Your election to the helm of the Assembly shows the high esteem in which the international community holds you and your country, the Czech Republic.

I take this opportunity to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo of South Korea, for his outstanding stewardship of the work of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I also wish to place on record my Government's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for his continuing strong leadership and immense diplomatic skill in dealing with many pressing international issues which confront us today.

Papua New Guinea welcomes and congratulates the newest State Member of the United Nations, Switzerland, and looks forward to the accession to membership of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

Papua New Guinea acknowledges the political will and wisdom shown by all parties — the Republic of Indonesia, Australia, Portugal and the United Nations — in respect of East Timor. We also praise the people of Switzerland for their collective decision to formally join the United Nations.

With the election of a new Government in my country, our Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Sir Michael Somare, recently made a nationwide address detailing some of the challenges facing our economy and what is required to put it back on the path to recovery. He identified specific areas and sectors where remedial measures are needed.

Domestically, our capacity to meet these challenges and worthy goals is lacking. The problem is further exacerbated and our capacity further undermined by poor governance, incompetent economic management, a rise in corruption, and diminished public confidence in political leadership and in the fundamentals of representative government.

The new Government of Papua New Guinea is determined to chart a new course by addressing these problems.

There have been specific initiatives taken to enhance trade, investment and economic prospects. The Pacific countries members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Island Group of States (ACP), together with the African and Caribbean member States, are now in the process of pursuing negotiations with the European Union for possible economic partnership agreements.

Recently, I announced the direction of our Government's foreign policy focus. I stated that the

policy must be underpinned by the development and strengthening of core relations in the Asia-Pacific region.

We intend to consolidate relations with our close neighbours and give more emphasis to the promotion of trade and economic cooperation, investment, and education and training.

As a small island developing country, and as an affected member of the global village, my country fully endorses the declarations and plans of action adopted at recent world conferences. We believe that international conferences such as the Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg summits and their plans of action are blueprints to resolve many of the pressing global challenges and needs, including poverty eradication; sustainable development; environmental degradation and climatic changes; and social ills, including HIV/AIDS and other preventable diseases. They also echo the voices of the majority of the world's population living in poverty and struggling to overcome the biggest challenge of all — how to survive.

These declarations and plans of action are a further amplification of the historic Millennium Declaration and its Development Goals, signed by all our heads of State and Government in September 2000.

The challenge is to forge new global partnerships for change — partnerships in which both developed and developing countries join together to address the issues that the global community will face in this new millennium. These partnerships also include international financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and civil society.

These partnerships will be necessary if the shared hopes of humanity for peace and security, sustainable development and a better way of life for all are to be realized.

Papua New Guinea has been faced with an internal conflict in our province of Bougainville for the last decade. Like all previous Governments, the current Government will continue to address the continuing peaceful resolution of this conflict as a matter of priority.

Papua New Guinea would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to the United Nations for its role in resolving this crisis. The conflict has, in fact, involved substantial commitments of personnel and funds by the United Nations, neighbouring countries and Governments, including our own.

I would like also to place on record our appreciation to the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu for contributing financial and manpower resources to the Regional Peace Monitoring Group to restore peace and security to the island.

In addition, on the recommendations of the Secretary-General, and in close cooperation between the Papua New Guinea Government and the Bougainville parties, the Security Council approved the expansion of the role of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville in monitoring and assisting in the arms collection, storage and disposal, under the new Bougainville Agreement.

I am happy to report that the first and second stages of the arms disposal programme are progressing well; however, more remains to be done.

Our partners from Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, Japan, and the United Nations Development Programme continue to provide resources for restoration and development work. A number of non-governmental organizations, including churches and the Red Cross, have also been active.

Changing the world from a system of relations between imperial Powers to a partnership between sovereign States through decolonization is among the greatest achievements of the United Nations in the last century. The process will not be completed, as it must be, until the remaining 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories have exercised their inalienable right to self-determination.

Our Organization should continue to monitor developments in New Caledonia, Tokelau and the other 14 Non Self-Governing Territories on the United Nations decolonization list, on a case-by-case basis. Neither small size nor remoteness nor population density should be allowed to qualify or limit the exercise of this inalienable right. The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting, held last month in Fiji, once again reaffirmed its support for this principle.

The Pacific Islands Forum Group, with the exception of Australia and New Zealand, comprises of small island countries that are custodians of the largest ocean space. This ocean is rich in natural marine

resources. The countries of the region, however, have limited human, financial and technological capacities to control, manage, and secure those resources for the benefit of our current and future generations.

The recent Pacific Islands Forum adopted the Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy, which aims to ensure the future sustainable use of our oceans and their resources by our island communities and external partners.

The Pacific Islands peoples have not received their equitable share of the benefits resulting from the tapping of natural resources within their vast ocean space. For example, statistics showed that, in the year 2000, the value of fishery in the Central and Western Pacific was in excess of $2.5 billion per annum, but the Pacific countries earned a meagre $66 million in licensing fees. This situation needs to be reviewed and changed.

More than 80 per cent of Papua New Guineans live in rural villages, where they depend directly on the land, rivers, lakes and sea for their livelihood.

Our National Constitution commits the nation to conserve, use, and develop the rich variety of the country's natural resources for the common good and benefit of future generations. Papua New Guinea has therefore spoken out strongly and worked actively on a wide range of environmental issues.

Like other members of the Pacific Islands Forum, Papua New Guinea is firmly committed to the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. We strongly urge its full implementation.

Papua New Guinea, together with other small island developing States, continues to reiterate deep concerns about the adverse impacts of climate change, climate variability and sea-level rise, particularly with regard to the small, low-lying islands that are already experiencing extreme hardships. We will therefore continue to stress the urgent need for the developed countries to take a strong lead in the reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

Consistent with this, Papua New Guinea has signed and ratified both the United Nations Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. We believe that the Kyoto Protocol paves the way forward for Annex I countries to fulfil their commitments under the Climate Change Convention. We urge those parties to translate their legally binding targets into concrete actions for the reduction of their gas emissions.

We welcome the support for the Kyoto Protocol by Japan, the European Union and, more recently, China and Russia. We urge the United States and Australia to join the global efforts towards addressing this issue, including ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

Pacific Forum island leaders also reiterated continuing serious concerns over the shipment of radioactive materials through the region. They called on those States engaging in these activities to accept full responsibility and liability for compensation for any damage that may result, directly or indirectly, from the transport of radioactive material through the region.

Global warming has brought an increase in the number of cases of diseases like malaria in the higher-altitude regions of our country. This is still a major threat to Papua New Guinea, particularly in the most populous region — the highlands.

Papua New Guinea is not immune to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and tuberculosis is again on the rise, so there is an urgent need to find preventative measures for these diseases.

In this regard, we welcome announcements by the Governments of Japan and the United States, among other, that they would set aside substantial financial resources for eradication programmes in developing countries. Papua New Guinea concurs with the recent calls by the international community to reform and restructure the charters and mandates of the two Bretton Woods institutions: the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These two institutions must realign their policies and focus more on development and poverty eradication, rather than on the reconstruction of economies.

Their lending policies should be made more lenient and flexible in assisting the developing countries, including small islands, landlocked and the least developed countries. The ultimate goal must be to transfer resources into the hands of the needy, the marginalized and the ostracized of society, so that they can take pride in the ownership of the outcomes of new initiatives taken in their own countries.

The way forward was agreed to under the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States and Agenda 21 and in the recent conferences on landlocked developing

countries and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Brussels.

I must however underline that to date, we have observed a lack of effective implementation of both the Barbados Programme of Action and Agenda 21. There has also been little or no increase in the international aid and development assistance given to the developing countries to build necessary infrastructure, human resource capacities, and other basic needs. This, in our humble view, has to change if the developing countries, especially the small island developing States, landlocked and the least developed countries are to attain sustainable growth and development.

There is an urgent need to reform and restructure the United Nations General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies and agencies, as well as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, so as to reflect the recent dynamics and changes.

The Security Council should be reformed and expanded in both categories, permanent and non-permanent. It must take into account the interests of both the developed and developing countries.

Although we are encouraged by the general positive signs of progress towards resolving conflicts and securing peace in several regions of the world, Papua New Guinea remains concerned at the continuing conflict in the Middle East. We believe violence will not resolve the conflict. We call on both Israel and the Palestinian leadership to come to the negotiating table to discuss outstanding issues with the view to resolving the conflict peacefully.

It would be remiss of me if I did not make mention of the fact that 11 September 2002 marked the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the United States of America. The Government and people of Papua New Guinea express to the Government and people of the United States, and the families of the victims drawn from many countries, our sympathy for the tragedy and suffering of just a year ago, when terrorism struck this great city of New York and Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania.

Though distant from this tragic event, we share in the deep sorrow felt around the world, and in the admiration of the extraordinary bravery and sacrifice of so many who engaged themselves in the rescue efforts. Our thoughts are with those who continue to mourn.

Papua New Guinea joins with all the freedom loving nations and peoples of the world in condemning terrorism in all its evil forms. Terrorist attacks can never be justified. Terrorism, in which the lives of the most innocent and vulnerable are so senselessly taken, must be especially condemned.

Papua New Guinea fully endorses and supports all efforts towards the effective implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

You concluded your opening address to this Assembly, Mr. President, by appealing to Member States to focus on what we have in common — and especially our desire to live in a peaceful and secure world where the values and principles expressed in the United Nations Charter are honoured. Papua New Guinea shares your vision and the confidence that underpin your address.

If the nations of the world — with our great diversity — focus on what we have in common, we will build and secure a better world, one in which the benefits of economic development are shared, and one in which the marvels of modern science and technology, including modern medicine, are harnessed for the common good of humanity. But none of these things can be achieved without a genuine and lasting peace.

In conclusion, I want to reaffirm Papua New Guinea's firm commitments to what I have outlined and reiterate that global, regional and local partnerships in promoting sustainable development is the key to addressing the challenges that confront the world today.

The President: I thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Papua New Guinea for the statement he has just made. I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen, His Excellency Mr. Abubakr Al-Qirbi.

Mr. Al-Qirbi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express to you, Sir, our warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of this session and to wish you every success conducting the affairs of this session. Your ample diplomatic skills are well known. I wish also to thank your predecessor for his good conduct of the preceding session. I also wish to extend my thanks to His Excellency the Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan for the quality of

the report that he presented to us on the work of our Organization and to wish him further success in the discharge of his tasks.

I am pleased in this connection to convey to you and all the participants in this session the greetings of His Excellency President Abdullah Saleh of Yemen, and his sincere wish that the work of this session be highly successful, particularly when it is convening under grave and internationally important circumstances.

This fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations is being held while the world still vividly remembers the terrorist acts and the tragic and terrifying disaster, which befell the United States on 11 September 2001 and which represented a grave development in terrorist acts. This awakened the international community, requiring it to mobilize all its potential to face that threat to international peace and stability. The proliferation of international terrorism and the exorbitant price it has imposed on many peoples and States, including my country, has made fighting terrorism an obligation and a responsibility for safeguarding peace, stability and development.

My country was among the first States to suffer from terrorism and its harmful repercussions still affect us. We have not hesitated to face that danger. Prior to the September 2001 events, we drew the attention of the international community to the need to unify efforts to combat terrorism and eradicate it before it took root.

While doing its best to combat terrorism, my country has emphasized the need to convene an international conference on terrorism under the auspices of the United Nations so that we can reach a unified definition thereof. We emphasize the need to distinguish between terrorism and the right of peoples to resist occupation. We need to end the causes that create a fertile climate for fostering terrorism.

Israeli violence and terrorism levelled against the defenceless Palestinian people constitute a genuine obstacle to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace and create hotbeds of extremism and terrorism. Such violence impedes international efforts and initiatives to solve the Middle East question, while threatening stability, security and prosperity in the region. It also increases the incidence of violence and extremism and presages unpredictable consequences. Consequently, the international community must exert the utmost pressure on Israel to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), and General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948 and to withdraw from all occupied Arab territories — Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese — and return to the 4 June 1967 borders. The international community must work towards establishing a Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

We reiterate our position that the Arab peace initiative constitutes an integrated framework for the achievement of peace. Peace for Israel will not be achieved unless it withdraws from the occupied Palestinian territories, helps to re-establish the Palestinian security institutions and grants the Palestinian Authority control over its own territory.

We stress that the Palestinian people are solely responsible for choosing their leadership and representatives for negotiating a final settlement. In this connection, we look forward to the outcome of the efforts led by the United States and the other members of the "quartet" to solve the Middle East question. We hope that the United States vision will be transformed into a time-bound programme that will lay down guidelines to prevent Israel from circumventing any new agreement, as it did those of Oslo, Camp David and Sharm el-Sheikh, through recent statements by Sharon.

Since the Republic of Yemen is interested in the security and stability of the Middle East, we emphasize the need for Israel to get rid of its nuclear arsenal and to subject its nuclear facilities to international supervision. Israel should strive to free the Middle East region of weapons of mass destruction.

The policy of imposing sanctions on some Arab and Islamic countries, Iraq in particular, should be tackled to ease the considerable harm done to the Iraqi people. Here, I emphasize my country's position that the sanctions imposed on Iraq should be lifted. We reject the use of force against Iraq as long as it abides by international resolutions.

Yemen warns of the gravity of using force against Iraq. We also warn of the disastrous consequences for the region if force is used and if waging war takes precedence over solving the problem peacefully. A peaceful approach, such as bringing back the inspectors and clearing up the doubts about Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction, should be taken. We call for the lifting of sanctions against Libya, Sudan and

Cuba and for continuing dialogue as a means to achieve fair settlements, to safeguard the rights of the concerned parties and to respect their sovereignty and systems of government.

Based on our interest in the situation in Somalia and our endeavours to achieve peace and stability there, we call on the international community to intensify its efforts to bring peace to that country and to support the peace process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, so as to preserve the security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Somalia. We are ready to contribute to this international political endeavour.

My country is of the view that current efforts to reform and restructure the United Nations, including Security Council reform, should enhance the Organization's role and achieve broader participation and more equitable representation in the Council, in keeping with the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution.

Yemen attaches great importance to the Millennium Declaration adopted during the Millennium Summit. It paves the way to new relations in the twenty-first century; it calls for encouraging dialogue among civilizations and for the spread of the culture of peace; and it calls on richer States to shoulder their responsibility towards least developed countries in facing the challenges of poverty and deadly disease. In fact, we have not seen the implementation of any of those principles. We therefore call upon States to abide by the Millennium Declaration and implement it in order to engender better relations between the rich and the poor; to remove the spectre of the clash of civilizations and races; to enhance the high principles and values of religions; and to remove the distorted view of the tolerant Islamic religion that has been propagated by others.

The developing countries are suffering from difficult economic conditions due to poverty, unemployment, declining living standards, over-population, mismanagement, debt servicing, and so forth, in addition to the burdens imposed by new economic policies. For these States to be fully integrated into the international economy, they need new opportunities and support so that they can build their economies and carry out administrative and economic structural reforms. They need further financial assistance and opportunities to compete, as well as technology transfers on concessional terms. They should also benefit from investments and cooperation, and free trade zones need to be established. We should try to implement the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and cancel the accumulated debts of those countries.

My Government is making strenuous efforts to achieve full development, to complete the building of an infrastructure, and to eliminate poverty. Thus, we have implemented a programme of administrative, financial and economic reform, and have updated the investment law to attract foreign capital, with a view to bolstering the service and economic sectors. We have begun a carefully prepared and well balanced privatization programme and are making efforts to join the World Trade Organization and integrate ourselves into world economy.

At this session, we look forward to the adoption of important resolutions that will enhance our joint campaign to achieve security and stability, welfare and prosperity for our peoples. I am confident that our concerted efforts will lead to the success of this session and will help us achieve the results we desire.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my congratulations to Switzerland on its admission as a Member of the Organization and to Timor-Leste on its coming admission. They will make a fresh contribution to the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations A/57/PV.7

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-seventh session

7th plenary meeting
Saturday, 14 September 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Address by The Right Honourable Sir Tomasi Puapua, Governor General of Tuvalu

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Governor General of Tuvalu.

Sir Tomasi Puapua, Governor General of Tuvalu, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir Tomasi Puapua, Governor General of Tuvalu, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Sir Tomasi Puapua (Tuvalu): Proud as we are that our small island nation of Tuvalu is a member of this great family of nations, first we must give thanks to God Almighty for his love and for allowing us all to participate in this general debate. Let me also extend my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Government of our host country, the United States of America, for its warm hospitality and support.

Tuvalu warmly congratulates you, Sir, on your election to the high office and commends highly the outgoing President for his leadership, especially during a very challenging year for the Organization. Tuvalu also wishes to reaffirm its strong confidence in the Secretary-General. In addition, we warmly congratulate Switzerland on its entry into the United Nations, and we welcome membership of East Timor later on in this session.

Tuvalu sincerely joins, both in spirit and hearts, in the remembrance of the great loss, particularly of innocent human lives, following the terrorist attacks on American soil last year. We pray for the victims' families and for full recovery in restoring their lives. Within our own Organization, we are proud that of this turmoil the United Nations has come out ever stronger with the resolve to combat international terrorism.

In Tuvalu and many island countries in the Pacific, we know our own unique vulnerability is also fertile ground to forces of terror that threaten the security and survival of the islands. It is in this regard that Tuvalu is committed to the Pacific Islands Forum Declarations on regional security, highlighted in the Forum Communiqué, which is circulated as a United Nations paper. In the same spirit, last year Tuvalu pledged its commitment to the United Nations anti-terrorism resolutions, and we still do. But we also need both technical and financial assistance from the international community to enable us to fulfil our international obligations.

Joining and being part of the United Nations is never easy, particularly for a small and poorly resourced island country such as Tuvalu. Asserting our place here competes with the many other priorities of nation-building. However, our presence here is proof of our belief all along since our independence that, through the United Nations principle of equal participation, our voice on our security and development concerns will be advocated and better heard.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Although new, Tuvalu supports the reforms being undertaken in the Organization to streamline and ensure efficiency. In particular, it supports initiatives that have been developed on reforms in the Security Council and in the work of the Secretariat, and it is our strong view that they warrant proper support. It is also our view that equitable representation more reflective of the diversity in the United Nations membership, both in the staffing of United Nations Secretariat and in its various working committees, needs to be properly considered.

As a peace-loving nation, Tuvalu believes that the paramount mission of the United Nations must remain the maintenance of peace and security for all nations of the world, as clearly articulated in the preamble to the United Nations Charter. However, a long outstanding issue that also warrants serious consideration is the question of the Republic of China on Taiwan. This country has a population of 23 million people, a well-defined territory and an established democratic system of Government, and is a responsible international actor in world trade and relations. It is, therefore, our strong opinion that the right to self-determination of the people of the Republic of China and to join the United Nations should be urgently addressed. The United Nations cannot be said to be universal, nor can global peace be assured, until the Republic of China issue is properly resolved.

As we progress in the new century, however, we are increasingly challenged by the many changes that are taking place. Never before has the human race faced such complex challenges. We are in a world where the concept of globalization is in the media every day. Yet while we share a world where trade, communications and travel appear to have made us a single global community, large parts of the world continue to suffer from poverty, marginalization and environmental decline. We are far from being a cohesive global community. Unfortunately, Tuvalu and many small island developing States are in a particularly weak position to participate fully and take advantage of the opportunities of globalization. There is a genuine need for special assistance to enhance our capacity in this regard.

On the issue of conflict prevention, Tuvalu, like other vulnerable small island nations, is particularly weary of conflicts and wars. It is our humble view that, all too often, countries seem compelled to resort to military and violent action in order to resolve conflicts rather than seek to understand the root causes of these conflicts. We strongly feel this approach needs careful reconsideration. The build-up of arms and massive expenditure on so-called defence completely overshadow all efforts to resolve the underlying causes of poverty, unrest and instability. For us to survive as an international community we must reverse this trend. We must also learn to listen to each other.

In this respect, Tuvalu firmly believes that we must place greater faith in the United Nations as the forum for meaningfully addressing poverty, conflicts and instability and the effects of environmental degradation. It is here, in the common house of the human family, where countries should come, put down their arms, listen to each other and resolve their differences together. We believe that this is the only way forward to ensuring long-lasting world peace, security and sustainable development.

Tuvalu agrees with the importance of sustainable development and subscribes to the goals espoused in the Millennium Declaration, particularly those on poverty eradication. It also welcomes the holding of the United Nations international conferences, including, those on the rights of the child, financing for development and the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 through the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In addition, Tuvalu also appreciates commitments made recently to replenish the Global Environment Facility (GEF), so vitally important to many countries, especially to Small Island Developing States.

However, while Tuvalu appreciates the considerations for small island developing States in the various processes, we appeal for more concrete recognition, particularly by the donor community, of our special case so that we can cope with the challenges that we face, particularly with regards to capacity-building through quality education and health, access to fresh water and affordable energy, infrastructures and sanitation. Without additional and adequate resources, partnership initiatives arising from those processes will have no real meaning, especially for those groups that are most in need, such as women, children and people in rural and outer island areas.

It need not be repeated, but for Tuvalu, development aid is indispensable to development. For us, official development assistance (ODA) is the development budget. The maintenance of vital services

to our people through innovative partnerships, such as the Tuvalu Trust Fund, for example, would not have been possible without ODA. I would like at this juncture to acknowledge with great sincerity Tuvalu's appreciation of all its development partners, particularly our traditional donors, old and new, such as Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Japan, the European Union and the Republic of China on Taiwan.

For our part, having progressed as a sovereign nation with relative peace and stability over the past twenty-four years, Tuvalu is strongly committed to the United Nations principle of good governance. The recently elected Government of Tuvalu is fully committed to the principles of good governance, democracy and respect for the rule of law. It is also committed to accountability and transparency, in harmony with Christian values and traditional and cultural norms. As in the past, we are also committed to the prudent management of finances and to further work on reforms to improve our systems.

Tuvalu is surrounded by the huge Pacific Ocean and is well aware, both of its rights to its vast marine resources and also of its responsibility to ensure the proper and sustainable management of the potentials of the ocean. We therefore fully associate ourselves with the Pacific Islands Forum's Regional Ocean Policy recently adopted by our leaders.

Finally, peace, security and long-term livelihood for the world will have no meaning to us in Tuvalu in the absence of serious actions to address the adverse and devastating effects of global warming. At no more than three meters above sea level, Tuvalu is particularly exposed to those effects. Indeed our people are already migrating to escape. We are already suffering from the consequences of what world authorities on climate change have consistently been warning us. Only two weeks ago, a period when the weather was normal and calm and the tide was low, unusually big waves suddenly crashed ashore and flooded most parts of the capital island.

In the event that the situation is not reversed, where does the international community think the Tuvalu people can hide from the onslaught of sea-level rise? Taking us in as environmental refugees is not what Tuvalu is after in the long run. We want the islands of Tuvalu and our nation to remain permanently and not to be submerged as a result of the greed and uncontrolled consumption of industrialized countries. We want our children to grow up the way we grew up in our own islands and in our own culture.

We once again appeal to the industrialized countries, particularly those who have not done so, to urgently ratify and to fully implement the Kyoto Protocol and to provide concrete support in all our adaptation efforts to cope with the effects of climate change and sea-level rise. Tuvalu, having little or nothing to do with the causes, cannot be left on its own to pay the price. We must all work together. May God bless you all, and God bless the United Nations.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Governor-General of Tuvalu for the statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable Sir Tomasi Puapua, Governor-General of Tuvalu, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Lydie Polfer, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Luxembourg.

Mrs. Polfer (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): The current Chairman of the European Union, Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, has already had an opportunity to state to the Assembly the priorities and positions of the European Union. Luxembourg, through its commitment on a day-to-day basis, reaffirms its dedication to multilateral cooperation and to the work of this universal Organization.

President Kavan, you assumed your important post through a new procedure designed to revitalize the work of the General Assembly and intensify its impact. I am sure that under your guidance we will achieve other significant successes.

Mr. Han Seung-soo guided the work of the previous session during a period when the international situation was difficult and beset by serious problems. Thanks to his extensive experience and his understanding of international issues, a calm and fraternal message of cooperation and concerted action resulted from our debates. We all are deeply grateful to him for that.

Our Organization also has the advantage of having a Secretary-General whose humanism and outstanding diplomatic skills are universally acknowledged. He has begun his second term with his characteristic dynamism, which we all admire.

We wholeheartedly support the Secretary-General in the discharge of his important mission. There is no doubt that multilateralism and the support of the United Nations system for it have their own particular dynamic. We are counting on him to guide the Organization in accordance with the guidelines set out in the important statement he made last Thursday.

Regarding Iraq, we believe that the international community must continue to work through the United Nations, which is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. Iraq must provide unconditional and unimpeded access to the inspectors as well as the necessary cooperation. It must fulfil its obligations immediately. We are determined to support the efforts of the United Nations to achieve that goal.

International law was strengthened considerably with the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on 1 July last. This represents a major step forward in the process of the promotion of the rule of law and in the fight against impunity. This young institution must receive our full support. Indeed, it represents a guarantee in terms of the desire for protection, which is so deeply rooted in each of us. The broadest possible ratification of the Statute of the Court must remain a high-priority objective of the international community. The European Union is actively working to that end to ensure that the Court is genuinely universal in nature.

In the same multilateral context, the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development has just concluded with the observation that our planet's natural reserves and resources are limited and that only solidarity can reconcile the legitimacy of development and the preservation of an environment that respects life. It is humankind's responsibility to achieve a balance in these two cases.

The Summit charted a course through the Plan of Implementation, which sets out objectives and timetables. Some may feel that they are not ambitious enough, but they certainly can guide us. We need to implement this plan, and here new partnerships between the United Nations, Governments, companies and civil society are an important tool. Governments, however, still must shoulder all of their responsibilities.

In Doha, the World Trade Organization decided to link the opening of markets and technical assistance to development. In Monterrey, a global consensus emerged regarding financing for development. In the wake of Johannesburg, there is a need now to create synergetic relationships between public assistance, support from companies, local resources and the commitment of non-governmental organizations. Poverty, pollution, overexploitation and, unfortunately, violence, too, will continue for a long time to fuel pessimism.

However, we are encouraged to note that democracy and good governance are concepts and practices that are moving forward and that are increasingly broadly accepted. In this context, I should like to pay tribute to the young African Union, which specifically included among its objectives the advancement of the principles of democracy and its corollary, the protection of human rights.

Human rights, democracy, development and security are closely linked. The Council of Europe, whose principal mission is the championing of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law, has, like the United Nations, had to face an tremendous challenge following the events of 11 September. Like this universal Organization, the Council of Europe, whose chairmanship Luxembourg has held since May — its tenure is for a six-month period — has taken a series of specific measures in the international campaign against terrorism.

In addition to advancing the process of the signing and ratification of international instruments, the Council has devised guidelines for an international campaign that includes full respect for human rights. Indeed, when security is threatened, respect for human rights becomes all the more important. As statesmen, it is our obligation to prevent anti-terrorist legislation from infringing on, or even destroying, democracy in its attempt to champion the fundamental values of freedom and to safeguard human rights.

The events of 11 September provided a new impetus, as we all are well aware, to cooperation between institutional partners and, above all, emphasized the need to pursue dialogue between cultures and religions and to step up the process of reflection on civilizations in order to promote tolerance

and universal respect for human rights when we are faced with barbarism. Like the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Council of Europe is committed to that policy.

Coordination and complementarity between regional and international organizations are, moreover, among those priorities that Luxembourg has set for its chairmanship. It might thus be useful to establish links here with the important centres of the Council of Europe, namely the European Court of Human Rights — a unique mechanism for the protection of human rights; the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance; and, finally, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture. It is indeed my hope that the important work on norms and standards carried out by the Committee at the European level will one day be implemented at the international level, and that the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture — a Protocol that the Assembly will soon be called on to endorse — will enjoy the same success as its European predecessor. The establishment of the rule of law for all of us is an objective for which the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson worked tirelessly. She deserves our gratitude for her courage and her contribution to this vital cause. Her successor, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, can also count on our full cooperation and support.

The special session of the General Assembly on the rights of children in May 2002 allowed us, once again, to condemn that indifference which kills and causes great suffering to millions of disadvantaged and defenceless individuals. While the Convention on the Rights of the Child has made it possible to specifically improve the lives of countless individuals, work must be stepped up and expanded in order to guarantee that there will be a real difference for generations to come.

We view action in favour of women, which falls under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in the same context. Luxembourg would like to reaffirm its dedication to the significant work carried out by the United Nations funds and agencies in these areas. In particular I would like to mention the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). International action for reproductive health is at the crux of their programmes and today it remains indispensable. It requires firm support and the necessary budgetary resources. This is why Luxembourg firmly supports the efforts of UNFPA.

Reducing funding for women in difficulty is totally unjust and considerably increases the suffering of these individuals. To be sure, the work of those dedicated persons who inspire these programmes — including quite a few non-governmental organizations — will not come to an end any more than the labours of Sisyphus. But, are we not all aware of the progress which has been made possible in the daily life of individuals, groups and peoples, progress made through institutions which have been carefully conceived, democratically established, well managed, which in addition benefit from the moral authority provided them by the United Nations?

Bearing in mind the destiny of the individuals who are threatened here, international officials must be provided with the means to detect at an early stage any possible violation of peace and international security. A heightened awareness of our responsibility to provide for the protection of civilian populations is in fact necessary to allow for preventive action and, in particular, for maintaining peace.

As has been rightly noted by the Secretary-General, such preventive action should be done by strengthening the capacity of operational and structural prevention on all levels: local as well as national, regional and international, bilateral and multilateral. Increased interaction between all these levels is required so as to replace a culture of reaction by a genuine culture of prevention. The importance of investing in conflict prevention strategies, which may only yield fruit much later, is not always obvious. Such a choice requires a strong will of commitment by all of its players.

For its part, our universal Organization, through the Security Council and other bodies of the United Nations system, is dedicated to defining an outline of possible international action for prevention to make it more systematic and effective. The pivotal role of the United Nations and its authority are essential to achieve this end. It will be up to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly to deal with this question as well.

Increasingly, the need to focus attention on the destinies and tragedies experienced by victims and

react to the fact that conflicts today deliberately and increasingly claim victims among the civilian population can be given priority status, because international relations today are no longer hampered by the ideological battles of yesterday. However, antagonisms have not disappeared and may even cloak themselves in new forms. We need to remain vigilant.

One year ago, the international community was deeply shaken by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 against the civilian populations of New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. A few days ago we visited Ground Zero as a sign of our grief and to reaffirm our determination to act against barbarity. While we can indeed note that the efforts made since that tragic day to combat international terrorism have achieved some specific results, this should not, however, prompt us to let down our guard. Other tragedies are still open wounds, such as the particularly obvious case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Middle East, since Oslo, has seen extraordinary efforts at mediation. Faced with violence and hate, non-intervention and keeping one's distance are not real options. Efforts are continuing, aimed at creating conditions for new negotiations that might make it possible to conclude the work that has been languishing since Taba. The European Union is actively participating in this process and is making efforts, through new initiatives of the Danish presidency, to once again put the political context at the heart of our concerns. The tireless efforts of the international community are required to emphasize the need for moderation. Moderates, on whatever side, have no easy task when faced with extremism. But we support them. Peace requires all of us, in fact, to be internally split, as noted by Mr. Shlomo Ben Ami, but, I would add, it will also include reconciliation. And this must be prepared with the new external partner and also with those reluctant domestic forces, which must be reintegrated into the peace process.

Developments in Sri Lanka, moreover, demonstrate that hope can win the day over violence. In the case of Timor-Leste, it is also thanks to the United Nations that this hope has been fulfilled. And in Africa, several hotbeds of tension have been eased in 2002, in Angola, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi in particular. The effort made by the international community in Afghanistan must, as we know, be continued over time to insure the establishment and functioning of a stable democratic and fully representative State. The process of normalization under way in the Balkans deserves similar attention.

After some 160 years of existence as an independent State, Luxembourg is fully aware of the limits inherent in its size and the means available to it. In foreign policy we are acting with the firm conviction that the multilateral system of cooperation is one which provides a place and a role for everyone. In an interdependent world, we all must shoulder our responsibilities and make our contribution. And that is the basis of our commitment to the universal Organization, as it is the basis of our action to support development in the world. This is why we wish to raise our official development assistance to 1 per cent of GNP, after having been, in 2001, in the position to go beyond the threshold of 0.7 per cent recommended by the United Nations.

Our Organization brings together the international community. It is the unique forum which allows for exchanges and allows us to chart the path for totally new solutions. And I am gratified to see that during this session there are two new Members here in 2002, namely Switzerland and Timor-Leste. We congratulate them on having taken this decision and we extend a warm welcome to them to our Assembly.

The President: I now call on His Excellency the Honourable Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Mr. Badawi (Malaysia): Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I am confident that given your vast experience and diplomatic skills you will be able to steer this session to a successful conclusion.

I would also like to pay tribute to your distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea, for the outstanding manner in which he conducted the work of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Swiss Confederation as the 190th Member of our family of nations. We are confident that its membership, which formalizes its long involvement with the United Nations, will contribute enormously to the work of the Organization. We look forward to welcoming our newly independent neighbour, the

Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, as the 191st Member of the United Nations in the very near future.

Malaysia would also like to congratulate Africa on the establishment of the African Union and on its bold new initiatives, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

I also thank the Secretary General for his statement before the General Assembly. Malaysia shares his concerns over the four issues identified as threats to world peace.

A year has passed since the evil and cowardly attacks against the Organization's host country. As a result, the world has changed fundamentally in many ways. The international community has been galvanized into fighting all forms of terrorism. There is greater recognition that terrorism is a global problem that crosses borders and lurks in many of our countries, often without our knowledge.

The Security Council has taken prompt action resulting in mandatory measures aimed at eliminating all forms and manifestations of terrorism and requiring Member States to take legal, administrative, financial control and other law enforcement measures. Malaysia supports that action and reiterates its commitment to comprehensively fighting terrorism in all its forms at the domestic, regional and international levels.

Domestically, our Government has acted swiftly and decisively against terrorist groups that have threatened both our national security and international security. We have cooperated extensively at the bilateral level by sharing intelligence information and by implementing measures to cripple transnational crime networks that abet terrorist activities. In the Southeast Asian region, Malaysia and its partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have embarked on a programme of collaboration to deal with the issue at the regional level. At the international level, in addition to our support of United Nations actions and other international and bilateral efforts to fight terrorism, Malaysia works closely with the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and of the Commonwealth.

However, Malaysia believes that in our quest to combat terrorism, the norms and principles of international law should not be set aside. We also believe that in dealing with the menace, it is important for the international community to forge a broad consensus on what constitutes terrorism. Without a clear and common definition, certain perpetrators of terrorist acts will justify their actions in the name of State security or national liberation.

If the collective effort of the international community to win the fight against terrorism is to succeed, we must start looking at the problem in a comprehensive manner and must respond with a comprehensive strategy. It seems that in our urgency to address the problem, we overlook and continue to ignore why it exists in the first place. We forget that, however unjustified, terrorism is often rooted in political and economic grievances that still have not been adequately addressed. The fight against terrorism is not merely a fight against the perpetrators and conspirators of terrorist acts; it is also a fight against poverty, injustice, subjugation and illegal occupation that breed anger and hatred. There can be no comprehensive victory against terrorism if the root causes of terror are not eliminated.

Malaysia also regrets the continued association in certain quarters of Islam and Muslims with terrorism, as if one were synonymous with the other. We would like to reiterate that no race or religion should be condemned or discriminated against simply because some misguided people from that community are, or may have been, involved in terrorist activities.

Just as it is easy and convenient to hold a monolithic view of the Muslim world and therefore assume the worst about every adherent of the Islamic faith, it is also easy for Muslims to have a similarly monolithic and therefore incorrect view of other civilizations. If we continue to view each other in such terms, the confidence that has been engendered in the international community in our fight against terrorism can be eroded.

It is with those considerations in mind that Malaysia continues to call for the convening of a high-level international conference under the auspices of the United Nations to examine the terrorism issue in all its forms and manifestations and to formulate a joint response to this global threat.

Malaysia is concerned at the apparent lack of urgency in addressing the underlying factors that lead to cause terrorism. For example, most of the Muslim world believes that one of the key outstanding issues that continue to elicit resentment and fury is the situation in the Palestinian occupied territories.

Malaysia believes that, while all acts of violence against innocent civilians — whether inflicted by suicide bombers or by security forces — must be condemned, we must be even-handed in our approach in dealing with the situation in the region. It is important that we understand the root causes of violence there. We must put it in its proper context: the continued occupation of Arab lands by the Israeli occupying forces, in particular the demolition of Palestinian homes, the devastation of their towns and cities, the destruction of their livelihood and institutions and, worst of all, the loss of thousands of civilian lives and the wounding of tens of thousands more over the decades, which can only result in reactions from the Palestinian people. Israel's oppressive policies and practices have made life for the Palestinians unbearable and have engendered only hatred and resentment against the occupying Power, illegal settlers and those who are perceived to provide support to them. Israel must take advantage of the acceptance of the two-State solution and recognize that political and security issues must be looked at together. It must also acknowledge the need for the establishment of an international protection force to separate the two parties.

The international community, including the United Nations, cannot afford to stand on the sidelines indefinitely. It is time for the Security Council to become more actively involved and intervene directly in the situation, beginning with the dispatch of a United Nations or other international peacekeeping force to the occupied territories. Failure to act will only perpetuate the violence and exacerbate the resentment felt by the Palestinians — and by the Muslim world in general — towards those who are perceived to be responsible for refusing to address this issue in a fair and just manner.

We are pleased that Afghanistan is now on the threshold of becoming a viable, progressive and democratic State. However, many impediments to national unity and cohesion remain. These must be overcome through sustained international support and, more importantly, through the political will and commitment of the people of Afghanistan themselves. Such support should take the form of increased infusion of development funds and other forms of assistance and, more urgently, the promotion of a more secure environment in the whole country. We owe it to the long-suffering Afghan people to assist in the rehabilitation of their country and to ensure that the circumstances that led to their civil strife are removed and that they will not be abandoned once the immediate task of removing terrorist elements in Afghanistan is completed.

If the international community does not focus its efforts on comprehensively fighting terrorism by attempting to find a credible settlement between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and on nation-building efforts in Afghanistan, it risks being dragged into opening up battle fronts that could result in greater instability in the world and hamper efforts at combating terrorism.

In particular, we remain concerned that targeting Iraq outside the framework of the United Nations and in contravention of international law would not only be wrong, but result in a more volatile world order. In this regard, we welcome the decision of the United States to work with the United Nations to address this issue rather than pursue a unilateral policy of military intervention.

Malaysia agrees that the United Nations must not be cast aside. Engaging the international community through the United Nations, however, must not be merely an exercise in public diplomacy. The international community cannot be made to assume that military intervention against Iraq, in pursuit of both disarmament and regime change, is inevitable and that the United Nations is being engaged only as a matter of course.

The strength and relevance of this Organization has never come from affirming the unilateral designs of one Member nation; rather, it rests on the collective will of the international community that emerges from a multilateral process. Engaging the international community means initiating this consensual approach, which can address security concerns, without destabilizing the region, within the norms of international law.

In this effort, it is imperative that the international community be presented with clear and incontrovertible evidence of the perceived threat posed by Iraq to regional and international security. At the same time, every diplomatic and political effort should be made to urge Iraq to fully cooperate with the United Nations, including by allowing the return of United Nations weapons inspectors, and to comply with Security Council resolutions, as every State Member of

this Organization must do, so as to facilitate a resolution to this issue.

A pre-emptive attack against Iraq without any credible evidence being provided to the international community of the threat it poses will have serious implications for the international campaign against terrorism. Such an attack may produce real cleavages and draw imaginary battle lines between the Muslim world and the West, especially if the continued oppression of the Palestinians remains unattended-to. Such an attack could swell the ranks of the discontented in the Muslim world. It would provide a pretext for depraved extremist groups bent on stoking the flames of populist radicalism to mobilize and multiply. While it is important, therefore, to view the Iraq issue in terms of regional security, it is equally important to understand the broader consequences that will follow.

In our interdependent world, the need to strengthen the multilateral process is now more urgent than ever if we are to achieve our common goal of a just and humane international order based on international cooperation and solidarity.

The broader membership of this Organization has a vital stake in ensuring the centrality of the multilateral process as embodied by the United Nations and its specialized and affiliated agencies. Through it, the Members of the Organization can articulate their concerns and exercise their collective will in the protection and promotion of their interests. It is therefore important to ensure that the Organization and all that it stands for are not set aside on the basis of expediency or the exigencies of the moment. In this context we are reassured by the Secretary-General's emphasis on the imperative of the multilateral process.

As the country that will hold the forthcoming chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Malaysia will work together with other NAM members to ensure the continued centrality of this process, including the promotion of their development agenda.

In this context, we must continue to exert our combined efforts to ensure that globalization works for the benefit of all. In order to achieve this, we will have to create an international environment that is more conducive to satisfying the legitimate development priorities and needs of developing countries, as well as to addressing the economic imbalances prevailing in the world today.

The United Nations has a pivotal role in strengthening the multilateral process. It is ironic that in an era of enormous economic, financial and technological resources and capabilities, the world is witnessing a dangerous crisis of confidence in the credibility of multilateralism as a result of certain negative trends in the international system.

This challenge must be squarely and urgently addressed and remedial action taken here at the United Nations and in other relevant international forums. It is the expectation of States Members of the Organization that the United Nations will play a crucial and leading role in all of these efforts. Therein lies the continued relevance of the United Nations to its Member States.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Benaissa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco.

Mr. Benaissa (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to express to you, Sir, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, our sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation with a view to achieving a fruitful outcome to the session.

I should also like to take this opportunity to extend greetings to the Swiss Confederation and congratulations on its membership of the Organization. Given the cultural, humanitarian and intellectual heritage of that friendly country, its contribution will enrich the work of the Organization.

We also wish to congratulate Timor-Leste on its forthcoming accession to the Organization, and to wish that country every success.

Just three days have elapsed since the first anniversary of the tragic events of 11 September 2001. Those events deeply wounded the people of the United States and shook the entire world with horror. International relations have since entered a new phase whose dimensions and repercussions we are still assessing. Those events brought into focus the cohesion and solidarity of all segments of the American people in the face of such tragedy. They also brought to the fore the effectiveness and usefulness of solidarity and cooperation among States in combating terrorism. Indeed, as His Majesty King Mohammed VI has stated, terrorism has no religion or homeland. Everyone is aware of the Kingdom of Morocco's firm

stance and its renunciation of terrorism in all its forms, as well as its vigorous and concrete commitment to combating this scourge.

The gradual disappearance of economic borders and barriers to trade, the continued interdependence of markets and societies, the rapid development of information and communication technologies and the relegation of certain peoples to the sidelines of the world community have all added new challenges to the burdens already carried by numerous countries, in particular those in Africa, which have made great sacrifices in order to be integrated into the world trade system.

The African continent, unfortunately, is still a stage of tragic, complicated and generally fabricated conflicts. While Africa teems with huge natural and human resources, those very resources paradoxically become the cause and the fuel of many conflicts. Yet the international community remains hesitant to take decisive and necessary measures likely to create a climate propitious for peace and stability in our continent.

Seldom are the underlying reasons for conflict and instability in Africa taken into account. Of special importance in that regard are poverty, famine, the oppression of minorities, intolerance, control of natural resources, increased flows of refugees and displaced persons and health problems including endemic diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS.

But now, to face up to all these challenges, our continent has established an integrated framework: the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It will certainly give new impetus to the economic and social development of the continent. Morocco, expresses its hope that the international community will mobilize all its efforts within the framework of this energetic programme in order to reach effective and concrete solutions for solving the problems of our continent. My country is firmly intent on making an effective contribution to this endeavour.

The Kingdom of Morocco, convinced of the organic link between economic growth and the maintenance of stability and security, has spared no effort to help in settling African conflicts. In this vein, Morocco, on the initiative of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, convened a summit of heads of State of the Mano River Union, which was held at Rabat on 27 February 2002. At the summit, the Presidents of the sister countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone achieved practical results on consolidating regional peace, particularly with regard to laying down criteria for confidence-building, border security and revitalizing the work of the general secretariat of the Mano River Union. Morocco will pursue the necessary efforts to restore peace and stability in that region.

In the same vein, the Kingdom of Morocco continues its support for and contribution to the work of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), with a view to putting an end to conflict in that sisterly country, conflict which threatens stability in the whole region. In that context, my country, the Kingdom of Morocco, welcomed the agreement concluded on 30 July 2002 between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

The Kingdom of Morocco expresses also its profound satisfaction at the restoration of peace and stability in the sister country of Angola, which will enable that country to rebuild its economy and to fully play its role at the regional, continental and international levels.

Concerning the issue of the Moroccan Sahara, the Kingdom of Morocco would like to recall its constant good will, and its sincere and genuine determination to reach a final political solution to this fabricated issue. Morocco has always cooperated with the United Nations in this regard, thus bearing testimony to its full understanding of and sense of responsibility towards the Organization. Morocco would like also to emphasize its readiness to continue its cooperation with the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, Mr. James Baker, with the Security Council, in order to achieve a lasting political solution to the issue of the Sahara, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1429 (2002). Such an approach will pave the way for the creation of propitious conditions for a new dynamic in the region of the Arab Maghreb, which will enable it to become a stable economic partner that enjoys the trust of other regional groupings.

In this context, Morocco has supported the option of the framework agreement proposed by Mr. Baker to the Security Council as a basis for a negotiated political solution for this long-standing conflict. That option would preserve the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco and its historical sovereignty over its land, and would ensure for the population of

the Sahara provinces the exercise of expanded competencies in the management of their affairs within the framework of regional democratic institutions. Morocco accepted this option as a basis for negotiation in order to reach a final and lasting political solution to this regional conflict.

In the same context, Morocco insists on the enforcement of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1429 (2002), calling for the immediate release, without restriction or condition, of all the 1,260 Moroccans detained in Algeria. Their release has been demanded unanimously by the international community and humanitarian organizations, in the forefront of which is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Morocco categorically rejects any political exploitation of humanitarian issues related to the Sahara problem, especially since this concerns the fate of the longest-held detainees in the world.

The Kingdom of Morocco is linked to Europe by strong and diverse historic bonds. The strengthening of these bonds with all European countries constitutes a central tenet of our foreign policy. The Association Agreement which has been concluded with the European Union, and the other initiatives to strengthen Moroccan-European relations at the political, economic, cultural and social levels, reflect Morocco's determination to enhance this relationship, particularly at a time when the European Union is in the process of expanding its membership, something that would open new opportunities and horizons for Moroccan-European partnership. This approach not only seeks to achieve a bilateral strategic objective between Morocco and Europe, but it is also a valuable contribution to nurturing relations in the Euro-Mediterranean region, whose security and stability have become paramount for the world.

Morocco, by virtue of its Mediterranean identity, plays a positive role in the strategic, economic and cultural formation of a Euro-Mediterranean space, as witnessed by its active participation in the Barcelona process and in the Agadir initiative announced by His Majesty King Mohammed VI for building a free-trade area among Arab Mediterranean countries.

In that spirit of open-mindedness, responsibility and confidence in the future, Morocco aspires to develop its relations with our neighbouring country, Spain, with a view to building the Euro-Mediterranean region and moving forward. Unfortunately, however, recent months have been marked by events that are inconsistent with the maintenance of security and stability in the region and that are unlikely to serve the interests of the two countries and their peoples.

Morocco has spared no efforts in avoiding any move likely to affect adversely the steady growth of its relations with Spain, hopes that the upcoming Moroccan-Spanish talks, which will take place in Madrid this month, will tackle all issues and conflicts between the two countries, within the framework of responsible, calm and constructive dialogue.

The completion of Moroccan territorial integrity is an absolute priority for His Majesty King Mohammed VI and for the entire Moroccan people. Therefore, Morocco considers the status of the occupied cities of Sebta and Melilia and of the neighbouring islands to be an anachronistic instance of colonialism that has no place at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Morocco has never ceased, neither at the bilateral level nor in international forums, to officially demand the recovery of these parts of its national territory that are occupied by Spain. In so doing, it has always expressed its readiness to engage in dialogue in order to arrive at a solution that would guarantee Morocco's sovereign rights and secure the interests of the Spanish community in the areas.

We fervently hope that the two neighbouring kingdoms, Morocco and Spain, which are bound by ties of neighbourliness, common history and future, will build strong, stable and neutral relations to meet the aspirations of both peoples. As they build with mutual respect, confidence and common strategic interests, these relations will take into account the need for preserving stability and peace in our region, particularly at this specific juncture when the international community is confronting formidable security challenges.

In spite of continued appeals made by the international community to bring about peace in the Middle East, the Palestinian people still suffer on a daily basis from the mad violence inflicted on them by the Israeli occupation forces and practices that flout the most elementary principles of international humanitarian law. Notwithstanding successive Security Council resolutions, Israel still persists in its repressive policy, paying no heed to any international covenant

and denying the very agreements into which it has entered.

In contrast, leaders of the Arab States have demonstrated a keen sense of responsibility and a continued pledge to embrace peace, culminating at the Arab summit in Beirut in March 2002 with the adoption of the Arab peace initiative presented by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah ibn Abdul-Aziz of the sister Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Morocco welcomes the vision advocated by United States President George W. Bush, in which he called for the establishment of a Palestinian State to coexist side by side with Israel, as a lasting and viable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, one likely to achieve peace and security for all peoples of the region and to put a definite end to violence and instability. However, recent events and developments in the region do not, unfortunately, give substance to this vision. The spiral of violence has instead witnessed an unprecedented escalation.

For decades, the Kingdom of Morocco has been endeavouring to act as a bridge between the peoples of the region, with a view to achieving a climate of peace and security and contributing to the revitalization of the peace process, the creation of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital and the recovery by Syria and Lebanon of their territories occupied since 1967.

In view of the importance of Al-Quds al-Sharif as a key point in the peace process, and seeking to preserve the national and religious identity of this Holy City in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, is continuing his efforts, along with brother Kings, Emirs and Presidents of the Muslim member States of the Committee, with the United States of America and the Russian Federation in their capacity as peace patrons, and with the presidency of the European Union, with His Holiness the Pope and with the United Nations Secretary-General, in order to safeguard the Islamic Arab character of Al-Quds al-Sharif and to preserve it as a place of coexistence and tolerance among the three revealed religions.

The Iraqi issue has become a major preoccupation for the entire world, owing to the suffering of the Iraqi people. For this reason, while we demand that Iraq implement the relevant United Nations resolutions, we also call for deep reflection and patience in dealing with the Iraqi question, hoping that the Iraqi Government will respond to the international community's request. The aim would be to avoid the infliction of further suffering, distress and misery on the Iraqi people. At any rate, the United Nations is required to act within the framework of its Charter's principles and purposes in order to preserve the stability and security of all countries in the region. In this context, Morocco expresses its concern with regard to the Kuwaiti prisoners of war and missing persons, and the need to preserve the unity and independence of the State of Kuwait. Morocco also emphasizes the need to preserve Iraq's unity and sovereignty over all its territory.

The same region is witnessing another conflict involving two sister States that have strong bonds of friendship and cooperation with Morocco — that is, the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran. My country is hopeful that our brothers in Iran will become convinced of the need to settle the conflict over the islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and the Lesser Tunb, by peaceful means, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law. This will affect positively their bilateral relations, as well as the stability and cooperation in the region.

In conclusion, under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Kingdom of Morocco, as a member of the African, Arab, and Muslim family and given its position in the Euro-Mediterranean region, has always held dear the basic values of tolerance, moderation, open-mindedness and dialogue in dealing with the international community. Morocco will always honour its obligations towards the international community to strengthen the foundations of security and stability and to give impetus to the new visions charted for the world of the twenty-first century. We will always remain ready to contribute within the United Nations to finding the most efficient means of improving conditions in the world.

The President: I call on His Excellency The Honourable Phil Goff, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand.

Mr. Goff (New Zealand): Mr. President, may I begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency and assure you of New Zealand's cooperation during your term of office.

The opening of this, the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, came just one day after the anniversary of the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001, which shocked this city and the international community. The premeditated and callous mass murder of 3,000 people from 79 different countries was a sharp warning to us of the ongoing threats to peace and stability in our world. It was to protect humanity against such threats that the nations of the world came together in 1945 to establish this Organization in the belief that collective action was necessary to guarantee global peace.

Today, in the second year of a new millennium, the need to act multilaterally is greater than ever before. Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, environmental degradation, people-smuggling, drug-trafficking, diseases such as HIV/AIDS and the unsustainable depletion of our natural resources are all global matters that require a collective response.

We can be proud that a year ago the response by the United Nations to a new and unprecedented level of terrorism was immediate, united and effective. The primary victim of the attack, the United States, sought and secured international cooperation that achieved the incapacitation of the Al Qaeda terrorist organization and the removal of the Taliban regime that had hosted it. It was a model for international unity of purpose and multilateral action. It was a lesson that should not be forgotten as this Organization tackles other problems confronting humanity.

New Zealand has worked wholeheartedly under the mandate provided by the United Nations to defeat terrorism. We have introduced legislation to deny terrorist organizations funding and resources in line with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We have sought to assist our neighbours in the Pacific to do the same. We have committed peacekeeping personnel to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and combat forces under Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. But we are also aware that actions to suppress terrorism must be accompanied by measures to tackle the causes of terrorism. Injustice, lack of opportunity, hopelessness, desperation and the failure of legitimate channels to redress grievances all give rise to resort to terrorist actions.

The failure to resolve differences between Israeli and Palestinian people in the Middle East continues to be a catalyst for recruitment into terrorism. The Secretary-General, in opening this session, spelled out the basis for resolving the dispute. He referred to land for peace, an end to terror and to occupation, and to two States, Israel and Palestine, with secure and recognized borders. Both peoples are destined to live side by side. Both will benefit from an end to violence and a negotiated settlement. But agreement requires good faith from each side and a determined effort by the international community. We fully endorse the Secretary-General's renewed call for an international peace conference. Progress on this issue is now more vital than ever.

The situation in Iraq is also a threat to world peace, but we must look for solutions that will resolve and do not exacerbate that threat. No nation can be exempt from the requirement to comply with the resolutions passed by this Organization. That is necessary if the rule of law is to apply internationally. No nation can be allowed to commit aggression or to use weapons of mass destruction against its own people. The requirement to comply with United Nations resolutions is not the instruction of one country to Iraq; it is collective instruction that should have the unanimous endorsement of all Member countries.

Iraq's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions is a challenge to the entire United Nations membership. The United Nations must meet this challenge. How the situation is resolved matters to us all, not least the countries of the region itself.

Those who can exercise influence over Iraq should do so to avoid the need for resort to other actions. The response chosen by the Security Council must, however, take into account the need not to impose further costs on ordinary Iraqi people innocent of any wrongdoing. The response should not involve actions that undermine, rather than strengthen, the war against terrorism.

The United Nations has shown that collective action can save lives and help rebuild nations. We will soon welcome the world's newest nation, East Timor, into the United Nations, and we should celebrate the success of the United Nations peacekeeping mission and Transitional Administration in that country. I congratulate Sergio Vieira de Mello, the Secretary-General's former Special Representative, on his role, and I thank those countries that contributed so much to

giving hope and opportunity to the people of that small country.

New Zealand has had a battalion of peacekeepers deployed in East Timor since September 1999, and also has peacekeepers serving in 12 other countries. We are proud that they have performed their role with professionalism and respect for the people in whose countries they operate. Notwithstanding the small size of our population, New Zealand currently is the twenty-second-largest contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping personnel.

The promotion of human rights is another area where multilateral action by the international community is essential. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the United Nations has set out universal standards for the observance of human rights. There is no justification for any country to deviate from those human rights standards. It is a mark of shame that States Members of this Organization continue to breach basic human rights and a disgrace that other countries too often act as apologists for the offending regimes.

An important landmark in the last year has been the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As the culmination of longstanding efforts by non-governmental organizations, Governments and the international community as a whole, it offers the prospect of bringing justice to the victims of the most horrific crimes known to humankind and bringing their perpetrators to justice. It will serve as a deterrent where none has existed before. We have listened carefully to those who argue that the Court is not necessary and that it unduly jeopardizes their peacekeepers, but we cannot agree. The status quo, relying on domestic jurisdiction alone, has failed humankind throughout history and has borne witness to appalling crimes. The new regime has carefully built-in safeguards to protect the innocent.

We were dismayed by the actions of the Security Council in July. At that time, we challenged both the legitimacy and the substance of the Council's action. We do not believe that it was consistent with the Rome Statute or that the Council is able to arrogate to itself the power to change treaty relationships.

A further issue on which greater progress must be made is that of disarmament. The fact that humanity survived the nightmare of potential nuclear destruction during the cold war cannot be allowed to make us complacent about ongoing threats from weapons of mass destruction.

We welcome the Treaty of Moscow and the agreement between Russia and the United States to cut the number of strategic nuclear weapons each country deploys. These reductions, however, are not a substitute for irreversible cuts in, and the total elimination of, those weapons.

In some respects even greater danger is posed by short-range tactical nuclear weapons. There is a real risk that these could be launched by accident or in confusion, with no time available for communication between opposing sides.

Over the last year, two significant events have made our world a most dangerous place. The first is the emergence of international terrorist groups that have shown their willingness to use weapons of mass destruction — biological, chemical or nuclear — should they gain access to them.

The second is the situation in South Asia, where the world recently came close to direct conflict between two countries with nuclear capability. The international community has not done enough to reduce those risks.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not been brought into effect. Progress towards the implementation of undertakings made by nuclear-weapon States at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference has stalled. Nations have not taken sufficient steps to stop the production of fissile material and to reduce stocks.

In this and in many other areas much more needs to be done to address growing problems that affect all of us. The awful toll of HIV/AIDS, slowness in response to global warming and the growth in the smuggling and trafficking of people are but three further examples.

Mr. Tokaev (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It is essential that we renew our commitment to multilateralism as the best way to address global problems. That requires not simply money but, most importantly, political will. It is not a case of putting global interests ahead of national interests. Global

interests are national interests. The United Nations is our most valuable international organization, but we need to do more to enhance its relevance, value and its unique authority. All of us are stakeholders in its success.

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to make an announcement regarding the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which, as you know, will be held on Monday, 16 September. Draft resolution A/57/L.2, entitled "United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development", has just been distributed in the General Assembly Hall.

Also, in view of the really very high number of speakers already inscribed on the list of speakers and in order to comply with the decision of the Assembly that the high-level plenary meeting on NEPAD should meet from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and then from 3.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. on Monday, I would like to ask for the cooperation of speakers in the debate on NEPAD by limiting their statements to five minutes. I, therefore, appeal to speakers in the debate on NEPAD to keep that five-minute limit in mind when they are preparing their statements for Monday. Thank you for your understanding.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria.

Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner (Austria): Let me begin by welcoming Switzerland, our western neighbour, as a full member of the United Nations and her first participation in the General Assembly after her accession. Without our Swiss friends the United Nations would not be complete. Expanding the global reach of the United Nations can be seen as a positive aspect of globalization.

Having supported United Nations efforts to bring about a solution to the East Timor conflict for many years, Austria also looks forward to 27 September and wishes to congratulate East Timor on becoming the 191st Member of the United Nations.

Austria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Prime Minister of Denmark on behalf of the European Union. I should like to add a few observations to that very comprehensive statement.

Let me reiterate the sympathy of the Austrian people for the victims of 11 September 2001. Austria has shown strong solidarity from the first hour after the attacks and has acted in unison with her European partners and the United Nations to combat terrorism — a resolve that remains strong and will continue to do so.

As a former staff member of the United Nations, I wish to convey my country's sincere gratitude to the many dedicated people who are in the service of the United Nations in New York and at the other headquarters in Vienna and Geneva, as well as out there in the field, for their efforts on behalf of the international community in its fight against terror.

Combating terrorism requires a global effort and a comprehensive approach: prevention and the protection of the security of our countries and of the basic values of freedom and human rights, as well as coercive measures as a last resort. We must, however, base our decisions and actions on international law. The Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) under the very able leadership of Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Ambassador of the United Kingdom, is at the core of the United Nations coordinating role.

We must ensure that all States join and can join those efforts. To promote that goal, Austria hosted a symposium on combating international terrorism at the Vienna International Centre in June of this year, which highlighted the capacity of the Vienna-based United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) to provide efficient technical assistance to Member States in their fight against terrorism. Austria will make an additional million euros available for the strengthening of the ODCCP.

I am glad to note that Secretary-General Kofi Annan shares our view on the importance of the Vienna-based United Nations units, as expressed in his report on the need to strengthen the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the Secretariat. The report of Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism published earlier this week comes to the same conclusion. I therefore call upon the Member States to support that position.

It is also important to remind ourselves that the fight against terrorism cannot be fought with soldiers and policemen alone; we also need to fight the root causes: the abject levels of poverty, inequality,

injustice, the lack of sustainable development and of good governance.

When it comes to dangers for world security, we also have to focus on unresolved and perilous regional conflicts, such as in the Middle East. What is needed is an effort to speedily arrive at a political solution providing for two States, Israel and Palestine, within secure and recognized borders. Austria seconds the idea of an early international conference with the support of the Quartet and interested countries of the region aimed at finding solutions to the political issues such as the final borders of the two States, the final status of Jerusalem and the question of refugees. Austria considers the newly designed road map of the European Union towards the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State in the next three years to be a good basis for achieving a final and comprehensive settlement of the conflict in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), taking into consideration the Arab peace plan adopted in Beirut as well.

While continuing to respect the elected leadership of the Palestinian people the European Union has expressed its readiness to give all necessary and possible support to the reform process of the Palestinian Authority. Austria participates actively in those efforts. Austria is also deeply concerned that human suffering in the conflict has attained unacceptable levels, be it as a result of terror or of countermeasures.

The Middle East has also garnered the attention of the international community in the context of the danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The growing tensions result from the continued non-compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions on the part of Iraq. The potential threat of weapons of mass destruction endangering world peace through such policies should not and cannot be tolerated. For that reason Austria supports the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General to bring about the speedy, unfettered and unconditional return of United Nations weapons inspectors to Iraq, along with full compliance with the obligations contained in all relevant Security Council resolutions.

Austria welcomes the statement of President George Bush seeking broad international and multilateral support and cooperation with the Security Council on the issue of how to deal with the threat emanating from regimes that support terror or seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Only the Security Council can provide the legitimacy we need. At the same time, it is evident that the Security Council itself has to take responsibility for ensuring full compliance with its resolutions in order to maintain world peace.

The conflict between India and Pakistan over the issue of Kashmir also needs an urgent political solution. The consequences of an escalation could be catastrophic for the region and beyond.

In recent weeks, we have been starkly reminded of the fact that Afghanistan, which has been wrested from Taliban and Al Qaeda rule and has had a promising new start with the assistance of the international community, has yet to achieve a lasting peace and stability. The international community should remain committed and has to continue its support of the new Government of Afghanistan.

The fight against terrorism and violent fundamentalism in Afghanistan has also highlighted the importance of the whole region of Central Asia. During its chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2000, Austria made it a priority to draw the attention of world opinion to the unresolved issues and problems and to the very impressive potential of that region given mutually useful cooperation and good governance.

Turning to our own neighbourhood, I want to reiterate the importance Austria attributes to European Union enlargement and our firm commitment to finalizing the ongoing negotiating process towards the end of this year. Austria looks forward to welcoming new members by 2004, thus turning the vision of a united Europe into reality and extending the European zone of peace, stability and welfare to the whole continent and beyond.

I am glad to note that South-Eastern Europe has made substantial progress towards stability generated by various multilateral initiatives, particularly the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the Zagreb process. As an additional instrument for enhancing development in that region, in May of this year the Danube Cooperation Project was launched in Vienna, the aim of which is to make use of the Danube River as an integrative factor connecting the 13 countries of the whole Danube basin.

The dialogue among civilizations, which Austria has strongly supported from the beginning, is a new and important tool of diplomacy that should help us drain the breeding grounds of terrorism. In order to take this dialogue from the elites to the general public, we need to cooperate with the media. To that end, I organized an expert seminar on the role of the media in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in June of this year. This effort is designed to lead, hopefully, to a media code of conduct to emanate from the media themselves in order to create better understanding between the cultures and commonly to project messages shedding a positive light on cultural diversity.

As of July of this year, Austria has chaired the Human Security Network, the only interregional grouping in the United Nations framework particularly propelling issues of human security. In my capacity as Chairperson of that group, I have put the following two issues at the top of our agenda: the needs for a globally shared acquisition of a human rights culture through human rights education and for effectively addressing the terrible plight suffered by an ever-growing number of children in the world exposed to the horrors of armed conflict. The first "human rights city" in Europe, the Austrian city of Graz, will also host next year's ministerial meeting of the Human Security Network. In this context I should also like to express Austria's strong support for the adoption of the draft protocol of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

In my function as President of the Human Security Network, I have also taken the initiative, in the framework of the group of female foreign ministers, to raise the issue of Amina Lawal in a common letter to the Foreign Minister of Nigeria in order to remind Nigeria of its obligations under international human rights law.

In the Millennium Declaration, we set clear targets for our combined development efforts as Member States. We all did this in recognition of the priority attached to the fight against poverty and for a better and more equitable world. Disastrous floods in parts of Central Europe, including my own country, in Asia and the Americas, as well as droughts in other parts of the world just before the start of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, were a painful indication of changes rendering sustainable development even more important. The Summit brought about an action programme and a political declaration, which we welcome, although we would have wished to take some issues even further, such as in the field of renewable energy. I share the view of the Secretary-General that the Summit has instigated global action among a wide range of actors. It has highlighted the relationship between economy, ecology, social issues and development. It has also reaffirmed the Doha and Monterrey compromises.

The follow-up will have to cut through the complexities of the process and to pursue the most pressing issues. Implementation is the key word. This will be best accomplished by sectoral conferences on the major issues involved. Austria appreciates that the Summit has helped convince some major countries to join the ranks of those, such as Austria, that have already ratified the Kyoto Protocol.

Before closing, let me express my best wishes for a successful session of the Assembly under Mr. Kavan's guidance and allow me also to thank his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for his leadership and his efforts towards strengthening the General Assembly.

Having returned deeply impressed from South Africa, let me close by quoting a real hero and a man who stands for his principles while promoting reconciliation — Mr. Nelson Mandela. The following quote is from the entrance to the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, which I just visited: "To be free is not merely to put off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Anatoliy Zlenko.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): It is a great honour and pleasure to congratulate the representative of the Group of Eastern European States on his election to the high post of President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, let me wish him success and assure him of our support. I would like to address words of respect and gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey cordial congratulations to a new, welcome Member of the United Nations, the Swiss Confederation. We look forward also to welcoming the Democratic Republic of East Timor as a Member of the United Nations shortly.

We consider the joining of the United Nations by those States a truly historic event which testifies to the viability of our great family of nations.

The first days of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly began with a commemoration of the victims of the horrible terrorist acts of 11 September 2001. Over the past year we have repeatedly reflected on whether those events would remain a tragic moment in history, or whether they would prove to be a turning point. We have been searching for an answer to a question representing the most difficult challenge to humankind: how to preserve the fundamental right of every person — the right to life.

For Ukraine, "terror" and "terrorism" are not just words. For decades, the Ukrainian people lived under the oppression of terror, which was raised to the rank of State policy. Next year Ukraine will commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the induced famine which in 1932 and 1933 took the lives of over 7 million Ukrainians. That most tragic event in our modern history, caused by the totalitarian regime, was a brutal act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation. At that time the world failed to respond to our tragedy. Nor did it recognize early enough the face of fascism: certain politicians and certain States thought that that evil would bypass them. The consequences of that inaction turned out to be enormous.

Today, at the beginning of a new millennium, I am confident that each of us would like to rely upon the encouraging momentum of change which has taken place in the international arena, and to rely upon the unifying force with which the world responded to the events of 11 September 2001. In the face of the challenge of terrorism, the international community demonstrated its determination and resolve. Tangible results have been achieved by the antiterrorism coalition.

We regard the fight against terrorism as one of the aspect of a broad and long-term process of comprehensive international action aimed at abolishing the philosophy of hatred and intolerance, which is exacerbated by conflicts in various regions of the world.

The need for a new philosophy is particularly acute on the security front: success of the international presence in Afghanistan, the completion of the peacekeeping mission in East Timor and normalization in the Balkans are taking place alongside the dramatic developments in the Middle East, the so-called frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space, which remain unresolved, and persistent security problems in Africa. In this context, the United Nations has no right to limit itself to passive observation and uninvolved analysis.

At the Millennium Summit, the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, put forward an initiative on developing a comprehensive United Nations strategy for conflict prevention. We hope that ongoing discussions in the United Nations on the recommendations made by the Secretary-General on this issue will contribute to a real shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention.

The United Nations is capable of utilizing its consolidating force to strengthen the legal basis of international relations. We highly value the United Nations contribution to this process that brought into force the Rome Statute and led to the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Today, it is highly important to ensure the effectiveness of the Court and to preserve the integrity of its Statute.

Another priority task in this sphere is to conclude the elaboration of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. This year Ukraine became a party to the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. Upon the completion of relevant domestic procedures on the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, Ukraine will be a party to all 12 universal instruments against terrorism.

A number of tasks facing the international community in the social and economic spheres are further defining the role of the United Nations as a unique forum for dialogue among developed countries, countries with economies in transition and developing nations.

As a member of the Economic and Social Council, Ukraine stresses the need for reform of the Council and for strengthening its coordinating role. That process would, inter alia, significantly strengthen the Organization's potential to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the provisions of the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg.

At the Johannesburg Summit, the President of Ukraine proposed the formulation of innovative financial stimulation mechanisms for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular through debt-for-sustainable-development swaps. In our view, such steps would have a positive impact on nations' rates of economic growth and ecologically responsible development.

On 31 December 2001 Ukraine concluded its two-year term of membership of the Security Council. As a member of the Council, our country strived to make practical contributions towards finding solutions to critical security problems in many regions of today's world. Our country's position of principle is still that the Security Council is the only organ with the legitimate right to decide on the use of force, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. At the same time we consistently stand for increased transparency in the Council's work, and we hope that progress on internal changes will allow the process of comprehensive and long-awaited reform to start.

An important element of Ukraine's participation in United Nations efforts in the sphere of peace and security will continue to be its contribution to peacekeeping activities of the Organization. We believe that the key role played by United Nations peacekeeping operations and the personal contribution made by each peacekeeper deserve adequate recognition by the international community. I am confident that everybody present in this Hall will share our view. At the current session of the General Assembly, Ukraine will present a draft resolution proposing annual observance of an International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers as a way to pay tribute to the memory of fallen peacekeepers and to honour the participants in ongoing and past missions. We hope this will be unanimously supported.

Ukraine views positively the advancement of the stabilization process in the Balkans, in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. Ukraine holds to a consistent position concerning the territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of the Balkan States, and it fully supports the active involvement of European actors in an effort to further normalize the security situation in the region.

In contrast to a promising assessment of the situation in the Balkans, we are compelled to voice our regret over the absence of progress in the settlement of other problems which are of particular interest to Ukraine. Among them is the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The absence of confidence between the Georgian and the Abkhaz sides stands in the way of a renewal of political dialogue. As host country to the third meeting of the sides on confidence-building measures, which was held in Yalta in March 2001, Ukraine stands ready to take practical steps, in cooperation with the United Nations and other interested States, in order to renew the spirit of Yalta.

Speaking of the situation in Georgia, I cannot fail to mention that Ukraine is deeply concerned at the situation related to developments in the Pankisi valley. Ukraine believes that the existing misunderstandings can be resolved only through peaceful means, in compliance with the norms and principles of international law. We call upon the parties to employ all available political and diplomatic mechanisms to arrive at a mutual understanding and to take advantage of every opportunity to achieve détente in the current situation. Ukraine unconditionally supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

The situation in the Middle East also remains a source of deep concern for Ukraine. It is quite obvious today that the parties have become trapped in a cycle of violence, which contradicts the true aspirations of both peoples and breeds yet more hatred and desperation. We fully support the efforts of the international community, in particular the Quartet and the countries of the region, aimed at assisting the parties in finding peaceful ways to settle the conflict. Ukraine, for its part, strives to contribute in every possible way to a peaceful settlement. In April this year, during his visit to the region, President Leonid Kuchma presented Ukrainian proposals in the framework of international diplomatic efforts aimed at a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict; these envisage a range of parallel steps in the security, economic and political spheres. I should like to take this opportunity to confirm Ukraine's readiness to offer a venue on its territory and to provide all appropriate conditions for the conduct of talks on this issue. The achievement of a final, just and durable peace in the Middle East is not possible without the resumption of peace negotiations on the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The development of the situation concerning Iraq cannot fail to cause serious concern. We rely on the potential of the United Nations to solve this problem. The resolutions of the Security Council should be fully implemented. We expect that the new round of negotiations between the United Nations and Iraq will help to find ways to resolve this issue.

Today, the world looks with hope to the unprecedented integration process on the African continent. We hope that the birth of the African Union will strengthen the spirit of African brotherhood and unity in responding to the numerous challenges that confront the continent: armed conflict, poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Ukraine welcomes the African Union's establishment and its far-reaching plans to revitalize the continent. We hope that the New Partnership for Africa's Development will unite the nations of the world in a global partnership in support of peace, stability and development on the African continent. For its part, Ukraine is ready to continue to strengthen its cooperation and expand its economic ties with the countries of a united Africa, including in the framework of the new global partnership for the development of the continent.

Ensuring the proper implementation of the principles of the supremacy of law, the creation of conditions for economic growth and the effective functioning of the institutions of an open society are goals that remain fundamental in Ukraine's national policy. The President of Ukraine has launched a programme of political reforms to ensure a transition to a parliamentary-presidential form of governance. That process should bring about the further democratization of our society and should lead to consolidation of all domestic resources in order to achieve European standards and to strengthen concord in Ukrainian society. Our determined strategic goal is to become a member of the European Union and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which should finally ensure the indivisibility of the European political, economic and security space. Our course of action is aimed at making Ukraine a pillar of political stability, economic prosperity and cultural renaissance.

Here, I cannot fail to mention a tragic problem for Ukraine that is related to the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. Our country must address — virtually on its own — a complex set of technological, social and economic problems connected to the mitigation of that disaster's consequences as well as to the closure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 2000. We expect that our efforts will be supported by concrete action on the part of the international community, in particular through the implementation of the new United Nations strategy for Chernobyl.

Guided by the aspiration to achieve practical results, we are also determined to solve a broad range of other problems that have an important place on the agenda of the world forum. Undoubtedly, the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic is one of the most challenging of these. I should like to inform the Assembly that a regional conference for the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia will be held in Ukraine in November this year with the support of the United Nations and of other international partners.

I am confident that, a year after the 11 September tragedy in the United States, each of us realizes the particular significance of the tasks facing the United Nations. Looking ahead to the new challenges, we hope that, in the cause of protecting civilization's values, we shall be guided by our wisdom, which will allow us to avoid tragic scenarios and to protect the rights of every inhabitant of the planet, including every new human being who comes into the world even as we speak in this debate: the right to life, the right to dignity, the right to this world.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Samuel Rudolph Insanally, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana and former President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Over the Assembly hangs a cloud of uncertainty — indeed, of unease — about the future of multilateralism and of international relations generally. The tragedy of 11 September 2001, which we commemorated just three days ago, has so numbed our minds that we have yet to fully understand its consequences. Therefore, it is meet that, as a family of nations, we should not only remember the disaster, but also seek to learn from it how we can best restore to mankind some measure of faith and hope in our common humanity.

My delegation is pleased to see Mr. Jan Kavan presiding over the Assembly, since, as the representative of a country that has known the horror of war, he will undoubtedly inspire us to find our way forward. In wishing his presidency well, I would also like to place on record our gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea for

guiding us through a most difficult and challenging time. Our appreciation and thanks must also extend to the Secretary-General, who, throughout these past months, has helped to sustain our commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

We are pleased to welcome Switzerland as a full member of the family of nations, and we look forward to doing the same for East Timor when it takes its place among us.

The international system is now plagued by dangerous instability which threatens to undermine — if not to destroy — many of our States. Not only do we face terrorism, with its horrific violence, but we must also live with other manifestations of terror in the form of poverty, hunger and disease, which, although more silent, are no less deadly.

Conflict, both within and among States, clearly demonstrates how poorly an economy functions without political and social cohesion. Divisions that rend the fabric of our societies — divisions that derive ultimately from ethnicity and race — are not only severely counterproductive to our attempts to better the commonweal, but preclude the emergence of the durable peace and tranquillity without which we will never be able to prosper.

Recent global conferences have focused our attention on the importance of a rights-based approach to social inclusion. However, commitment to inclusive policies rests not only with States but with civil society as a whole. Poverty and underdevelopment are now easily exploited by some elements in our societies to undermine the authority of democratically elected Governments and to exacerbate ethnic and other tensions.

This instability is further compounded by the rampant trade in illegal drugs and arms, with its attendant corruption and violence, which daily tests the legal, financial, security and governance capabilities of most small States. The social contract between the State and its citizens has been seriously jeopardized by these new political developments. Greater national endeavours and international solidarity are now necessary if we are to confront these challenges and ensure the economic and social progress of our peoples.

Old conflicts persist, denying entire populations the opportunity to live in peace and security. The situation in the Middle East must be of special concern to us all, since it threatens to become a wider conflict. The right of the Palestinian people to national self-determination — a right guaranteed by international law — must be upheld if there is to be a just and lasting solution to the region's problems.

The tensions which exist in India-Pakistan relations with regard to Kashmir should not be allowed to persist, given the risk of calamitous nuclear conflict. As a country which is committed to the pacific settlement of disputes and as a friend of those two important countries of Asia, from which many of our own ancestors originated, Guyana wishes to encourage them to continue their search for a definitive solution.

Global instability results also from our failure to implement the Agenda for Development. After more than a decade of development-related conferences, we have yet to grasp fully the implications for international cooperation of an increasingly interdependent world and a globalized economy. The recent meetings in Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg brought the international community full circle in assessing the effectiveness of global collective action aimed at the realization of the millennium development goals and the eradication of poverty. We should now be fully persuaded that global action remains indispensable to the development process.

What is less clear, however, is the relationship that should underlie such action, which continues to be a daunting challenge. To what extent can equality be achieved in a system of skewed economic and military power? Will sovereignty ever subject itself to the imperatives of the global good? How can trustworthy procedures be found for international intervention in situations characterized by the threat of collapse of national social and economic structures? What more can be done so that the current international trading system is beneficial for all States, not for only a select few? How can the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions be made more responsive to the concerns and needs of the developing countries in particular?

I know that there are no easy answers to these questions. Indeed, each international conference and every general debate that takes place in this Assembly has made us more aware of how difficult it is to find a consensual approach to these issues. Dialogue and engagement are continuously balanced against hasty attempts to achieve short-term goals. Yet the

imperative of global stability — both political and economic — requires a greater symbiotic relationship among States. The increased permeability of borders, which has made all countries vulnerable to contagion from outside, is a reality which we cannot ignore.

Meanwhile, the debate on the benefits of globalization is becoming increasingly polarized. Despite their own best efforts at reform and restructuring, many developing countries have not really seen any significant improvement in their economic and social condition. The growth rate of most developing countries was 2 per cent lower in the 1990s than it was in the oil crisis years of the 1970s. Similarly, although the number of people living in extreme poverty, on less than one dollar a day, has reportedly decreased the past 15 years, those living on less than two dollars a day — an insignificant sum — has increased. Thus, poverty figures have in effect remained high, despite an improvement in world income over the past decade by an average of 2.5 per cent annually.

The situation has been especially difficult for small States. Over the past 10 years, the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), of which we are one, have been pursuing aggressive socio-economic reform measures designed to enhance the region's economic competitiveness so as to benefit from globalization. The results have generally been disappointing, in large part due to the small size, and the geographic location of the CARICOM countries, as well as their limited natural resource base and high dependence on international trade, all of which make their economies vulnerable to changes in the global economy. The situation is further aggravated by the high incidence of HIV/AIDS — the second highest in the world.

Small States such as ours in the Caribbean require development cooperation that is based on mutual trust and the fulfilment of commitments. One major step in this direction should be to focus on new ways of balancing equity, economics and ecology in order to create opportunities for small economies without inflicting disillusionment and despair. Every effort should also be made to ensure the full implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative so as to liquidate the debt burden in the poorest countries. To address the challenge of development, an integrated strategy must be found to address all the different elements of the problem.

Now — especially since Monterrey — it is fashionable to speak of partnership for sustainable development. Indeed, partnership, if properly conceived and implemented, can serve to eradicate poverty and promote economic growth. However, as the President of Guyana stated at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg, if it is to succeed, partnership between States must be based not on double standards but on mutual trust and respect and on the interests of all parties. Public/private-sector partnerships must be founded on equity and transparency, with full regard to the laws of our countries. Finally, partnerships with multilateral financial institutions must be informed more by an understanding of the situation in our countries and less by a doctrinaire approach to policy-making. To quote the President directly, "Progress will only come if there is an enlightened understanding of partnership."

Concerned by the inadequacy of past development models and the trend towards leaving development matters largely to market forces, Guyana has sought to promote at the United Nations the concept of a new global human order based on a genuine partnership for cooperation. By addressing the problems of peace and development in a holistic manner, this "concordat" would provide developing countries with the structural, strategic and long-term support that they need. Guyana hopes to build upon resolution 55/48 in the coming months with the aim of bringing greater predictability and stability to international development cooperation.

It is clear that the period ahead of us is fraught with difficulty, and that some of the challenges are historically unprecedented in scale. The instability and uncertainty by which so many societies around the world are afflicted must be attended to if we are to avoid failure. We must therefore ready the United Nations, the most important and most widely supported international governmental organization in existence, to address these problems. There is simply nowhere else to take them.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Zlatko Lagumdzija, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Lagumdzija (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I am grateful for the opportunity to address the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Allow me at the

outset to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr. Jan Kavan on his well-deserved election to the presidency.

The tragic events of 11 September have made us reconsider our achievements, real values, and the links between poverty, development, sustainability, respect for human rights and real progress. Yet, the goals envisioned by the perpetrators of those crimes have certainly not been fulfilled. The world has become more united and more determined to fight terrorism as a global threat to the values of civilization. The result is increased cooperation among specialized services and bodies of different States, as well as international organizations. However, we must be prepared for a long and exhausting confrontation with this evil of our times.

Last year we were all rightly focused on Afghanistan. Today we are concerned also about future steps regarding Iraq as a great threat to world stability and a shelter for terrorism. Fortunately, after a decade of being in focus as a crisis area, that South-Eastern Europe, the Balkans, along with Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the heart of the region, are no longer "CNN-able", given the present growing stability.

The time has come to salute the new image of my country and to start re-branding the perception of the region as a whole, which no longer fits anymore the "Balkan ghosts" stereotype. Great concerns such as Iraq, the Middle East and Kashmir should not let us forget that the Balkan region is bearing good news. We are all striving to finish the job of fully integrating the region into European democratic structures and values.

Enormous efforts and achievements are behind us, but we have to be careful and patient until stability becomes self-sustainable through the building of jobs, justice and functioning institutions, which will hold together new democracy.

In the light of last year's terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, our fragile State — the only European State where Muslims represent the majority religious group — was confronted with the heavy pressure of prejudice regarding a "clash between civilizations". But, as members may know, I come from a State that represented a crossroads of different cultures and religions, where different civilizations lived for centuries in tolerance and mutual respect.

Today we are even more convinced that all problems can be solved only through dialogue based on good political will. From that position we have joined the fight against terrorism and organized crime of all kinds. We have heightened our struggle against corruption by upgrading and strengthening our State institutions. We have placed the rule of law at the top of the agenda. Good work has been done, results have been achieved and we have thus proved that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a no-man's land.

Building democratic institutions, economic development and the protection and promotion of human rights are more than ever at the top of our priorities. Following the recent tragic events and all the turbulent changes that Bosnia and Herzegovina has experienced, we strongly believe in the paradigm of democracy, development and peace as the pillars of progress and stability for my country, but also for the immediate neighbourhood and region as well. Only responsible and accountable governance can bring about necessary changes and progress for all.

Unfortunately, we are still confronted with the heavy legacy of the past, and especially with the fact that the main culprits for the crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, are at large. The moment they are brought to justice, it will be easier to reach our goals. That is why I would like at this juncture to emphasize the importance of cooperation by all sides concerned with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

At the same time we are aware that democratization is sometimes a long process. Post-conflict peace-building is even more complex. But, we have set the vision for developing a safe, peaceful, stable and self-sustainable country, and we shall not stop half way. Today, we are a full member of the Council of Europe. More refugees and displaced persons have returned in recent times as compared to any other post-war period. In other words, in the last 18 months almost three times more properties, homes and apartments were given back to refugees and displaced persons all over Bosnia and Herzegovina than in the previous five years. Many roads, many villages, many roofs were built or repaired; many mosques and churches have also been built or repaired.

The contribution of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), the Stabilization Force, the High Representative, the Peace Implementation Council, the Office of the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and others in the family of the international community present in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been substantial in achieving the present level of stability and reconstruction.

We particularly recognize the value and the role of UNMIBH which is completing its mandate at the end of this year. The police reform and restructuring, with a view to meeting international standards of organizational capacity and institutional integrity, represents a clear success. The United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina was certainly one of the key players also in establishing the foundation for effective, democratic and sustainable law enforcement agencies, a fundamental element for the further development of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multi-ethnic, tolerant and democratic State. We welcome the transfer of the remaining tasks in this area to the European Union Police Mission, and especially the extension of the European Union responsibility in the area of juridical reform as one of the basic pillars of self-sustainability, future democratization and the reform process.

There should be no doubt that the United Nations has the potential to fulfil its new tasks and thus respond to the ever increasing challenges of the fast-changing world. It should provide leadership in building a prosperous world, founded no longer on force and threats, but on the rules of international law and respect for all rights, and rights for all.

In that context I would like to underline that we support the further democratization and modernization of the United Nations. New tasks and challenges call increasing efficiency, cost rationalization and the equal geographic participation of States and peoples in the United Nations system. Bosnia and Herzegovina also supports the continuation of work on reforming the Security Council, adjusting its membership in accordance with carefully designed criteria, taking into account equal geographic representation but not jeopardizing the efficiency of that United Nations body.

Allow me to briefly mention some of the priorities of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina has in the past two years proved its determination to move from the position of passive aid recipient from the international community to the position of contributor to international efforts. The fact that we are in a position to consider the need or even the imperative of taking a more active and creative role, and thus a bigger share of responsibility, testifies to the trend of normalization of the situation in the country.

Reconstruction is taking place and results are visible in the economy, social reforms, education, health care and so on. Economic reforms are directed towards the establishment of a single economic space and also with a view to setting up conditions for upgraded education and thus to offering the choice for our young generations to remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina and become the frontrunners of its development and future.

We have almost fully completed the conditions set out in the European Union's road map, which we hope will soon open the process of a feasibility study for Bosnia and Herzegovina's signing of a stabilization and association agreement with the European Union. We have gone through the process of being the object of international efforts and are now the partner in the process of making an economically and institutionally self-sustainable State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is only one phase in a process of finally becoming the owner of the changes in our country.

In partnership with the international community, we are streamlining a common strategy for political stability, institution-building and an economic recovery programme as the precondition of overall sustainable development. The entire region, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, is entering a new stage of stability and the European integration process, but we still have to be on the alert. The ghosts of the past, segregation and wars are losing ground.

In following the trials of war criminals before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague, we are bearing witness to the hope that justice and the future will finally bury projects based on genocide. That is why we have to act on a daily basis against those who are trying to open the box of drawing new maps or calling for new wars in the region.

So much energy and so many efforts of the local and international communities have been invested so far that we are not even allowed to consider anything but a strategy for success. Any type of hypothetical exit strategy of the international community can be based

only on a success strategy in building one multiethnic, democratic and European State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Once again, I would like to express the gratitude of my Government to the international community for its devoted support towards long-lasting stability and development in the region.

If the four million people of my country — Muslims, Orthodox Catholics, Jews and others who historically lived in tolerance, even in a non-democratic environment — cannot now live in a democratic and open society in the middle of Europe, then the logical question after 11 September is: How we can be consolidated and organized among the six billion people of our planet?

Coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, I am driven by the force of optimism and the strength of vision shared by the overall majority of those who do not want to repeat the past, but are ready to fight for the future. Jobs, justice for all, solidarity and Europe, through reforms and strong state institutions, are the items on our agenda today. We are determined to turn these words into deeds.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Kenya, His Excellency The Honourable Marsden Madoka, M.P.

Mr. Madoka (Kenya): Allow me to extend to Mr. Kavan, on behalf of my delegation, sincere congratulations on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh regular session.

May I also thank his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, whose tenure of office coincided with one of the most trying periods in modern history following the 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States. We appreciate the excellent manner in which he handled the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. May I also commend the efforts, courage and vision of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who has continued to be a beacon of strength and hope. We salute him. In addition, we also wish to welcome Switzerland to the United Nations and look forward to the admission of East Timor.

Coming from a continent plagued with many obstacles, we believe that the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly affords us yet another opportunity to critically revisit the promises enumerated in the Millennium Declaration and to take stock of progress made so far. Two years down the line, we should give an account of our commitment to the Declaration. In many instances, I am afraid, we shall be found wanting. We have not lived up to our promises and, as a result, many in the world are more desperate today than they were two years ago. They had placed their hope in our vision, our sincerity, our commitment and our sense of urgency and purpose.

Various United Nations conferences and meetings have been held since the 1990s to address the challenges confronting developing countries. It is therefore regrettable that there has been insufficient political will to implement the decisions arising therefrom. Meagre resources have been committed to debt reduction, improving market access, human resource development and tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other diseases.

The current global financial framework has demonstrated its inadequacy in dealing with the problems facing developing countries. The decline in official development assistance flows and foreign direct investment is an issue of concern. Despite efforts made to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development, conditions in the international arena have not been adequately supportive. For a start, my delegation calls for greater emphasis to be placed on concessionary lending and greater use of grants.

Moreover, global trade arrangements have tended to benefit industrialized countries. Africa's present share of global trade is less than 2 per cent. While industrialized countries continue to provide substantial subsidies for their agricultural sector, developing countries have been forced to cease similar support. This, combined with tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, has meant that our products stand no chance of competing with the products from the North. We must therefore build on the momentum achieved at Doha as well as encourage initiatives, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act and the European Union/African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States trade arrangements, to enable our countries take advantage of the opportunities in international trade.

Many developing countries, including Kenya, are experiencing a net outflow of resources, mainly due to debt service obligations. As a result, there are fewer resources targeted towards basic social services, thus compounding the poverty situation. We therefore call

for an overhaul of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative eligibility criteria so that countries facing high levels of poverty and debt burden qualify for debt relief.

Mr. Panou (Togo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The launching of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) have rekindled great hopes in the African continent. These initiatives have made it clear that the primary responsibility for the development of Africa lies in the hands of the Africans themselves. The decision by the United Nations General Assembly to hold a high-level plenary meeting on NEPAD on 16 September 2002 recognizes the importance of that initiative, which emphasizes the twin principles of ownership and partnership.

Kenya calls for genuine partnership in the implementation of resolutions, commitments and, especially, the Millennium Development Goals, the Monterrey Consensus and the Outcome of the just concluded World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The special session of the General Assembly on children, held in May 2002, provided the international community with an opportunity to renew its commitment to the rights-based approach to children's programmes and activities. The Government of Kenya has made continued efforts to improve the welfare of children. Kenya has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and has signed the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Kenya has also ratified instruments prohibiting the involvement of children in armed conflict. A comprehensive Children's Statute was enacted in parliament and became operational on 1 March 2002. Kenya also has in place an early childhood development policy, safeguarding children from birth until the age of six.

My delegation notes with concern that the reduction in funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) by a major contributor will have a negative impact on ongoing programmes in many developing countries. The UNFPA continues to play a critical role in assisting the most vulnerable in society — namely, women and adolescents. It is our hope that voluntary contributions to the organization will be restored to their former level and further increased as a matter of urgency.

With regard to the United Nations Centre in Nairobi, my delegation welcomes the improvement in the level of utilization of the conference facilities. We encourage the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to ensure that all meetings and activities on environment and matters related to human settlements are held at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) so as to utilize the excellent facilities there and to further strengthen the role of the Organization in all matters charged to it in conformity with the headquarters rule.

My delegation would like to commend the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly for elevating the Commission on Human Settlements to a fully fledged programme now known as the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to be its secretariat. We have no doubt that the upgrading will facilitate the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium.

The Secretary-General's programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 shows that the activities undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN-Habitat continue to depend heavily on extrabudgetary resources. This has severely constrained the ability of both organizations to play their roles effectively due to an unpredictable financial resource base and under-provision. We urge the Secretary-General to ensure stability and predictability in funding UNEP and UN-Habitat through the United Nations regular budget.

My delegation would like to congratulate the newly appointed High Commissioner for Human Rights, His Excellency Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello. We would like to assure him of our full cooperation, and we look forward to working very closely with him. At the same time, we wish to pay tribute to the outgoing High Commissioner, Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson, for her able leadership.

Kenya wishes to underscore the importance of treating human rights issues in a balanced manner. This very Assembly has consistently reaffirmed:

> "that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same

footing and with the same emphasis". (*resolution 56/165, seventh preambular paragraph*)

I am afraid that this has not always been so.

There is a genuine concern that too much emphasis has been given to political rights at the expense of economic and social rights, such as the right to development. These are vital issues that the international community can no longer afford to take lightly as it endeavours to eliminate hunger and poverty and ensure a just standard of living for all people.

Kenya holds the view that the General Assembly should play a leading role in spearheading development initiatives as envisaged in the Charter. We welcome the progress already made in the reorganization and revitalization of the General Assembly. This organ should now reclaim its leadership role in focusing and shaping debate on issues of global interest.

On issues of world security, Kenya has a long record of participation in peacekeeping operations. Today, Kenya is the sixth largest troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations in different parts of the world. We are particularly happy to be associated with the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations in East Timor, Sierra Leone, and on the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Greater emphasis should be put on the deployment of adequate force levels to missions in Africa. In particular, we would like to see greater support in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Africa is a continent ravaged by conflicts and instability. However, the recent progress in the resolution of some of these conflicts is very encouraging. In particular, the signing of a protocol between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in Machakos, Kenya on 20 July 2002 was a very welcome development. Other positive developments towards lasting peace in Africa include the signing of an agreement between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Rwandese Republic, the holding of peaceful elections in Sierra Leone after years of bitter civil war, and continuing efforts towards reconciliation of the warring factions in Somalia. We also welcome the recent positive developments in Angola. Kenya will continue with its mediation efforts in the region and in the continent as a whole.

On the important question of reform of the Security Council, Kenya calls for the speedy conclusion of negotiations aimed at equitable representation and an increase in membership in the Security Council. With the establishment of the Peace and Security Council as an important organ of the new African Union, Africa must now play its rightful role in matters of international peace and security. It is time Africa was accorded the elevated status it deserves in the Security Council.

Kenya believes in the rule of law and will support all genuine efforts to this end. We subscribe to peaceful settlement of disputes through regional efforts, the International Tribunals and the International Court of Justice. Kenya fully supports the historic milestone of the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998 and its entry into force on 1 July 2002. Impunity for serious war crimes is indeed a denial of justice, which must be brought to an end.

In 2001, we witnessed the most devastating form of international terrorism' in the multiple terrorist attacks of 11 September. As a country that faced a similar attack in 1998, Kenya strongly believes that terrorism can never be justified under any circumstances. We fully support the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and have already ratified the 12 anti-terrorism conventions. The process of domesticating them is already under way.

In conclusion, Kenya looks forward to greater commitment to build a secure and more prosperous world for all. The destiny of mankind is inextricably intertwined in spite of national boundaries. Events in the global arena have clearly demonstrated that the effects of ignorance, poverty, disease and insecurity in one region or another country can impact negatively on the well-being of the rest of the world. Let us get together and build a world where all can live in peace and prosperity.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Her Excellency The Honourable Lilian Patel, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Malawi.

Ms. Patel (Malawi): On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Malawi and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate President Kavan most warmly on his unanimous election as President of the fifty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly. I am confident that under his able

leadership, buttressed by a pragmatic approach to the proceedings of the session, we will be able to further consolidate past gains on a variety of issues, and also mobilize renewed international resolve and political will to reinvigorate our continued search for viable responses and solutions to the many pressing challenges that threaten the very survival of humankind.

I take this opportunity also to pay special tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea, for the able manner in which he handled the work of the General Assembly during his tenure of office.

Further, I would like to register my country's vote of thanks for and special recognition of the invaluable contribution made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in injecting fresh impetus and a sharper sense of purpose and direction into the work of the United Nations. His informative and insightful annual reports on the work of the United Nations clearly point to an organization that is moving in the direction that it should and is much more focused on the quest for accelerated growth and socio-economic progress of the disadvantaged poor nations.

A number of developments have taken place around the world since the last general debate. While some of these are relatively positive and are, thus far, a cause for optimism, yet others, a majority, are, at best, disheartening and tend to cast a long shadow on prospects for long term progress, especially in our part of the world.

As I speak now, for example, six southern Africa countries, including Malawi, are in the throes of a severe and life-threatening food crisis brought on by drought-related deficits in grain harvests. Up to 13 million people in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe are facing severe food shortage, which has already given rise to a threat of widespread famine and a rise in famine-related health problems. What we are clearly seeing here is a further deterioration in the general poverty situation and the humanitarian plight of the rural masses in these countries. Chances of the food insecurity translating into a serious region-wide security and health catastrophe cannot be over-emphasized, especially given that southern Africa is already the epicentre of the global implosion caused by HIV/AIDS. The current food crisis in the sub-region stands out as the severest in many years. It is poised to inflict incalculable damage on the social, economic and cultural fabric of whole communities, and it endangers the efficacy of the financial and economic sustainability of the institutional and public policy frameworks for sustainable development currently under implementation.

Indeed, southern Africa is facing uniquely different multifaceted humanitarian crises arising not only from civil wars, but also from social and economic factors and other natural disasters. The crisis is certain to roll back numerous past gains in many sectors, particularly because of the centrality of agricultural production to the gross domestic product and rural employment of most of the affected countries.

The food shortage has placed further serious strains on the already low revenue collection capacities of the affected countries, especially to the extent that budgetary allocations are having to be appropriated from critical social sector services to fund massive grain imports necessary to supplement inadequate local grain stocks, thereby financially starving other equally urgent sectoral needs. Sadly, however, the next harvest, due in eight months, may not hold much promise either, unless the drought cycle, which is the major contributing factor, does not recur.

Initially, Malawi faced a grain deficit of 600,000 tons caused by two years of a paradoxical combination of drought and devastating torrential rains and floods. This tonnage was urgently required to stave off a rapidly deteriorating famine situation that is expected to affect 3.2 million people. The President, His Excellency Dr. Bakili Muluzi, declared the current food shortages a national disaster on 28 February 2002, and a vigorous national appeal for emergency relief has been under way since then.

The response to this appeal by the donor community, both local and international, has been very encouraging. On behalf of the Government of Malawi, I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to the local and international humanitarian organizations and Governments, such as those of the European Union, the Governments of Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and other friendly Governments, which together have financed nearly 75 per cent of the emergency relief supplies received so far in Malawi. We also wish to thank the United Nations funds and programmes for

their timely assistance, in particular the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as well as resident United Nations agencies, for providing relief coordination and procurement services during this critical hour of need.

In a special way, and on behalf of the six Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries affected by the famine, the Government of Malawi wishes to thank the Secretary-General and the United Nations family for successfully organizing the Consolidated National Appeals for the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa, which took place on 18 July 2002, here at United Nations Headquarters. We are grateful for the outcome of the appeal, and we would like to extend similar sentiments of appreciation to all Governments and donor organizations that made pledges and commitments towards the funding requirements of the appeal.

In addition, we welcome and applaud the Secretary-General's timely appointment of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. James Morris, as his Special Envoy for the southern African humanitarian crisis. Mr. Morris's personal meetings and consultations with the Heads of State and Government of the six southern African countries and his tour of the subregion have led to useful high-level exchanges that will form an important basis for tackling the problem of food insecurity in future. We undertake to work with him and give him all the support and cooperation necessary for the fulfilment of his mandate.

The high levels of poverty and the deepening scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other transmissible diseases afflicting our people continue to ravage populations in the developing countries, particularly those of Africa. We take no relief from the annual reports for the year 2002 released by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Health Organization, whose graphic statistical data and hard facts portray an unabating, vicious and complex interplay between structural poverty and a startlingly high HIV/AIDS prevalence in poor countries. The resulting humanitarian crisis threatens millions more lives over the next few years.

As home to one of the largest numbers of victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the world, southern Africa needs closer attention and concrete actions, as well as deeper resource commitments by the international community, to help build sustainable capacity to address the critical poverty issues and excessive mortality from HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. These are extremely sensitive issues, and the international donor community should consider, on an emergency basis, the difficult moral issues and the choices involved.

It is extremely troubling that some Member States and donor institutions have suddenly taken a minimalist approach to the central role played by United Nations funds and programmes in tackling health problems in the developing countries. It is needless to remind this Assembly that the work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS is very crucial. We call upon donors and multinational institutions to reconsider their decision and to restore funding to UNFPA.

Further, we call upon multilateral donor institutions and industrialized countries to grant deeper debt relief and forgiveness. Transnational organizations, which extract huge profits from their business operations in poor countries, have the moral responsibility to invest in HIV/AIDS prevention, care, support and treatment. International pharmaceutical corporations, too, ought to show more compassion by expanding access to antiretroviral drugs and other life-sustaining medicines, including meaningful concessions on price reduction and voluntary donations. We note with gratitude the positive steps taken by some pharmaceutical companies in that direction.

My Government acknowledges the important role played by the United Nations in mobilizing support and resources for the development process in the poor countries. It is not enough, however, to hold one conference after another without effective follow-up and implementation mechanisms. There is therefore a need for supportive global processes that would ensure shorter time lags between the adoption of programmes of action and their implementation.

It is our hope that the establishment of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed

Countries in the United Nations Secretariat will promote regular consultations and closer follow-up of agreed programmes of action to ensure their fulfilment. Such programmes of action include the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the International Conference on Financing for Development and other commitments flowing from the recent General Assembly special sessions on HIV/AIDS and children. An earnest attempt is necessary to link up the commitments and agreed outcomes of the Brussels Programme of Action and the Monterrey Consensus in order to create a rich resource base for the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Action for sustainable development.

Other major problems and challenges that are faced by poor countries and stifle their progress have previously been extensively covered and debated in the Assembly and in various other international forums. But some of them need to be mentioned again. The transition of poor countries from continued dependence on international charity to self-reliance is contingent on certain factors such as free and open trade. Agricultural and other commodities from developing countries need to gain access to Western markets without unnecessary barriers. It is ironic and morally unacceptable that products from the West are freely offloaded onto our markets but not the other way round. Fair trade is a two-way transaction, and every endeavour must be made to ensure that it remains so.

On an optimistic note, we welcome the commendable progress that has been achieved in an effort to bring some conflicts in Africa to resolution. This engenders the hope for the eventual restoration of stability and a chance for decisive peace on the continent. The ceasefire agreement reached on 4 April this year in Angola and the peace agreement signed on 30 July between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo represent notable historic milestones in bringing to an end the conflicts in the Great Lakes region. I am confident that the United Nations will use that opening to step forward, as it always has, to strengthen its involvement and that of the international community to consolidate those agreements and closely monitor their implementation.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the people and the Government of East Timor on their attainment of independence after many decades of dehumanizing subjugation. My Government also welcomes East Timor's coming membership in the United Nations.

In the same vein, I congratulate Switzerland on its admission to the membership of the United Nations. The significance of this historic development to the world body cannot be over-emphasized, especially given the invaluable contribution the Government and people of Switzerland have made over the years to the progressive development of international humanitarian and human rights affairs.

My Government is concerned at the unrelenting bloodletting in the Middle East, particularly the senseless carnage among innocent civilians. We encourage both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to give peace a chance through dialogue. We call, in particular, for the cessation of hostilities, provocation and incitement, which only serve to inflame the delicate conflict situation.

Malawi believes in the principle of universality of human rights. One of the basic rights that every member of the global community can expect to enjoy is the right to freedom of association. It is on the basis of that, and in a spirit of reconciliation, that Malawi believes that the United Nations should seriously reconsider the question of the readmission of the Republic of China. The more than 21 million people of Taiwan should be allowed to freely participate in the affairs of the United Nations without any hindrance, as that is what this Organization stands for. After all, Taiwan, through its rapid growth in the economic, political and social sectors has demonstrated that it has a lot to offer for the good of humanity through the United Nations.

Africa is on the threshold of a new beginning aimed at making a lasting clean break with the errors and political missteps of the last five decades. The promulgation of a development blueprint, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), provides a very comprehensive, clear focused road map for economic revitalization of the African continent. NEPAD, as a framework for development, contains broad-ranging measures and actions that are reflective of a new vision for long-term development requirements, as well as constructive and beneficial participation in regional, international and other multilateral processes for effective integration of Africa into the global political and economic order.

It is gratifying, therefore, that the international community is willing to support this newly emerging pragmatic framework for partnership and ownership of development on the continent. I would like, once again, to encourage our development partners to join in and support Africa's new quest for economic recovery and sustainable development.

In conclusion, Malawi, along with other African countries, would like to express deep gratitude to the leaders of the Group of 8 countries for voicing unequivocal support for NEPAD. We are thankful for the creation of the Group of 8 Africa Action Plan adopted at the recent Summit in Kananaskis in Canada, which will operate as the platform for enhanced cooperation and partnership between Africa and the industrialized Group of 8 countries. We are confident that strong international networking and support for NEPAD will provide a solid basis for growth and progress, as well as decisive peace and political stability in Africa.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His excellency Mr. Osborne Riviere, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Mr. Riviere (Dominica): The Commonwealth of Dominica joins other delegations in congratulating you on your election to chair the proceedings of the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that you will preside over this Assembly with the efficiency and dedication required to take us through the agenda of the fifty-seventh session.

We also take this opportunity to extend to your predecessor our sincere appreciation for the excellent manner in which he steered the work of the fifty-sixth session of this General Assembly.

One year ago we convened in a city reeling from a terrible tragedy which spurred the international community to unite in the fight against international terrorism. The world's response to the events of 11 September 2001 was one of total condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and a firm undertaking to uphold the principles of freedom and democracy enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The United Nations Security Council was swift and decisive in its adoption of a resolution focused on suppressing the financing of terrorism and denying terrorists any safe haven in which to operate. Sadly, terrorism remains today one of the greatest threats to human security. The Commonwealth of Dominica therefore once again reaffirms its commitment to the fight against international terrorism and to ensuring that the channels for funding of terrorist-related activities and international crime are permanently disabled.

My Government is making every effort towards the successful implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) in spite of limited human and financial resources. Legislative measures which have been put in place include an Exchange of Information Act, which addresses some of the concerns of the international community as expressed in resolution 1373 (2001). This Act was passed in the Dominica Parliament in January 2002, while a bill for the suppression of financing of terrorism will be tabled before Parliament shortly.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for the initiatives taken by the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Commonwealth, the European Union and other countries and organizations to assist developing countries in their implementation of resolution 1373 (2001).

The historic entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) takes us one step further in the fight against impunity of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Commonwealth of Dominica's accession to the Statute of the ICC in January 2001 is indicative of our support for the establishment of a permanent international court that will bring the perpetrators of the most serious international crimes to justice. In this regard, the ICC must seek to prevent or penalize terrorist-related crimes which may be localized in action, but may have severe global consequences.

The international situation, notably developments in the world economy, has not been favourable to the growth prospects of small States such as the Commonwealth of Dominica, which remains a small, open and largely agriculture-based economy, extremely vulnerable to external economic shocks. While the events of 11 September 2001 are behind us, the irreparable damage to the economies of small Caribbean countries is still evident. Hardest hit was the tourism sector, one of the areas with the greatest potential to contribute to Dominica's social and economic development.

The growth of our offshore financial sector, another potential contributor to our economic diversification, has been adversely affected by our country's inclusion in the list of non-cooperative countries and territories put out by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Financial Action Task Force. All attempts thus far to have our country removed from that list have proved futile, in spite of the implementation of the measures necessary to ensure best industry practices in the financial services sector.

The Commonwealth of Dominica nevertheless commits itself to the global combat against money-laundering and stands ready to cooperate with the international community in its anti-money-laundering initiative. A number of new laws have been enacted by Parliament to legislate its anti-money-laundering policies. The Commonwealth of Dominica has also established a Financial Intelligence Unit and a Money-Laundering Supervisory Authority to ensure that our financial-services sector remains free from money-laundering.

As I address you, my country is facing one of the most challenging periods in its history. The slowdown in the global economy, the impact of the events of 11 September 2001 on an already deteriorating fiscal situation, the continued difficulties of integrating into the multilateral trading system in a globalized world and the rapid decline in overseas development assistance have undoubtedly affected our economic performance in an appallingly negative way.

We have been left with no other option but to pursue a stabilization and adjustment programme, which, although approved by the International Monetary Fund, has not succeeded in keeping detractors, including the public service union, off the streets.

The success of this programme should lay the basis for sustained higher growth output and employment, as well as poverty reduction. We recognize, however, the attendant costs of implementing this programme. The Dominican people have been asked to make temporary, but heavy sacrifices in order to place our country on the road to recovery.

We wish to recognize, in this forum, the support given in these difficult times to the Commonwealth of Dominica at the Caribbean regional level, and look forward to the timely support of the international community.

Last year, as the world turned its attention to the events of 11 September, the Secretary-General reminded us that none of the issues that faced us on 10 September had become less urgent. Indeed, the United Nations calendar for the past year has been crowded with special conferences and summits, all convened to address problems and issues of global concern that affect the everyday lives of the peoples of the United Nations. While it is true that those issues are current and of interest to the smaller members of this body it is unfortunate that many of us do not have the capacity or wherewithal to ensure that they receive effective representation, not only at the conferences but, more significantly, in the preparatory committees that precede the conferences. It is no accident, therefore, that most often the States that least benefit are the smallest and least influential.

The Second World Assembly on Ageing and the special session on children attempted to deal with issues which affect the most vulnerable members of our societies. The World Assembly concluded in April with a Plan of Action for implementation by the international community. In small countries like the Commonwealth of Dominica, this implementation must, of necessity, include the recognition of older persons as the pillars of our societies — people who make a significant contribution to our economic development.

My Government has developed a national policy on ageing which seeks to ensure that older persons are provided with protective care and given an opportunity to continue to participate in the development of our nation. A few weeks ago, we were privileged to host the tenth annual regional meeting of HelpAge International — a happy coincidence, given that among our population of 75,000, we have 22 centenarians. I want to make specific mention of the world's oldest living person — a Dominican woman, Mrs. Elizabeth Israel, affectionately known as Ma Pampo — who is allegedly 127.

Civil society organizations like HelpAge must be recognized for their vigorous attempts to deal with issues affecting older persons. As a family of nations, we established set goals, strategies and actions in pursuit of a better life for children at the special session of the General Assembly on children. As a

signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Commonwealth of Dominica remains committed to ensuring that children's rights are protected and respected. Children are one of our most valuable resources.

The Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development was convened in March this year, and was hailed as a "turning point in the approach to development cooperation" by the international community. It was widely acknowledged at Monterrey that, in order for development assistance to be effective, both the donors and the recipients had to share the same goals of sustainable development and the alleviation and eventual eradication of poverty.

We applaud the commitment expressed by the major donor Governments to the Monterrey Consensus. What we desire, however, is an equitable distribution of the increased official development assistance funds pledged by the heads of State or Government of the European Union in March 2002. The same can be said of the "new compact for global development" proposed by President George W. Bush on 14 March 2002, by which the United States pledged to increase its core assistance to developing countries by 50 per cent over the next three years.

We are still confident that global conferences can work, because it has been proved that they serve as forums where new proposals can be debated and consensus sought on topical issues. At the recently concluded Johannesburg Summit, world Governments agreed to halve by 2015 the number of people lacking clean water and basic sanitation.

My Government was particularly pleased that at the conclusion of the Johannesburg Summit the richer countries stated their willingness to reach an agreement, by January 2005, within the World Trade Organization, for "substantial improvements in market access" for food exports from developing countries.

The Johannesburg Summit underlined the necessary linkage between environmental protection and natural resources management and the issues of poverty, underdevelopment and social justice. The Summit demonstrated the interdependence of social, environmental and economic factors, which must work in unison if long-term sustainable development is to be achieved. Empirical evidence exists to show that poor and weak national economies impact negatively on the environment, while environmental degradation and the over-utilization of natural resources result in declining economies and impoverished communities.

The Government of Dominica remains fully committed to Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States. We reiterate our unwavering support for the Johannesburg Plan of Action and urge all Member States to make good on their commitments for the successful implementation of all sustainable development conventions.

The increase in levels of official development assistance, to which I alluded earlier, is essential when viewed in the context of the implementation of development strategies by small island developing States. It is recognized that the small, open economies of these small States require effective means, including financial resources, to counteract the negative effects of globalization and trade liberalization and to foster sustainable development.

The Commonwealth of Dominica is acutely aware of the magnitude of the challenges facing our pursuit of sustainable development. Ours is a country with a history of consistently seeking a national development path guided by sustainable development. An integrated development plan, undertaken with the participation of a diversity of stakeholders and sectors, will shortly be completed and will provide us with a framework within which we can address physical, economic and social vulnerabilities in an integrated manner.

At this time, my Government wishes to place on record its appreciation of the continued commitment of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the social, economic and infrastructural development of small, vulnerable economies very much like its own. As the fourteenth largest economy in the world, the Republic of China on Taiwan has demonstrated the benefits of having a global perspective on development. We welcomed the decision of the World Trade Organization, in November 2001, to admit the Republic of China on Taiwan as a full member of that organization. We look forward to a similar occasion when the Republic of China on Taiwan will take its place in these halls as a full member of the United Nations family.

The Commonwealth of Dominica joins other delegations in congratulating the African nations for two important developments. First, the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the African

Union, which we are confident will be a strong institution committed to the promotion of peace and stability, democracy and human rights, cooperation, development, prosperity and human dignity. Second, we have the programme for socio-economic revitalization of the African continent, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The United Nations has a central role to play in ensuring the success of this bold initiative of the African States to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment. These two development provide great examples that our Caribbean region can emulate.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the resolve of the Millennium Declaration that

> "the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people." *(A/54/2000, para. 5)*

We must ensure, through the global and regional programmes, that globalization truly contributes to sustainable development and prosperity for all. We wish the 57th General Assembly every success in advancing the goals of peace, democracy, prosperity and sustainable development.

The President: We have heard the last speaker inscribed for this afternoon's meeting. But I wish to point out that a representative has requested to exercise his right of reply. I now call on the representative of Spain.

Mr. Flores (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, in his statement, made reference to the Spanish cities of Sebta and Melilla, as well as to other Spanish territories. In the framework of the relations of friendship and good neighbourliness between Spain and Morocco, based on mutual respect and a shared history, I wish to underscore that Sebta and Melilla, as well as the adjacent islands and rocks, are an integral part of the territory of Spain, and those citizens are represented in the Spanish Parliament, with the same rights and the same conditions as their compatriots, enjoying the same rights and freedoms, and protected by the same legal order.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.